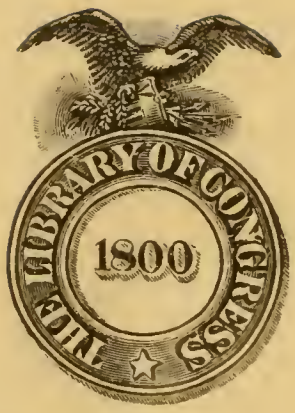
VERSES



THE VAGABONDS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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INCLUDING A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR BY

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PREFACE.

On going through our anthologies, the question is humiliating in its lack of a rebutting answer: "Is there any *American* Poetry?" Nature is as generous of her masterpieces in her gallery here as elsewhere, though they are not polished and varnished to tameness. The result of outdoor seekings after indoor reflection—apart from the trammels laid down by pedants and pedagogues is American. Life is our envelope as droll, doleful and divine as under any sun. Only, we do not use words morally "red-flagged," and we

choose those flowers of speech which shelter the fruit in its earliness. There are pebbles, too, in our clear brooks, but useful: the Goliath of Mammon may well dread the missiles that a David would choose for his attack. Abroad, it is enough that a story is well told; here, we insist on the story being worth telling.

It is shallow and insufficient to palliate with the assertion that our decoctions from a draft of the one English source must remain of similar substances; water becomes, under man's manipulation and skill, wine, beer, or quintessence: color, aspect, even quality, not to say special flavor, can be imparted, and the crystal clear disappears when changed to ruby, topaz, or sapphire.

The truly popular poet is the one whose choice morsels are rolled on the tongue; carried in the mind and repeated off the lips to ears that will likewise transport them afar. These authors are not those shelved behind glass and referred to. Their effect must strike the heart, and haunt. Without naming the few meriting this grade, our subject claims the preference for figuring at all the reading and elocutionary "bees" these fifty years. Impossible to glance through the following leaves without recognizing gladly old favorites "familiar as household words," while selections from the writer's stories and essays sprinkle more arid spots with bloom and verdancy.

Nothing speaks more forcibly for the steady, serene and active life, our ideal,

than this one, prolific but of considered outcome, that of a tree properly nourished and pruned, which, even if of woodland origin, thrives by the home, perfuming it in spring, sheltering it in winter and giving succulence in the harvest-tide.

John Townsend Trowbridge was born on the night of the 17th of September—or in the morning next, for the occurrence was on the tick—1827. It was under the Presidency of John Quincy Adams, and has passed under those of twenty successors, including Roosevelt. The latter, as a New Yorker, was also the governor of his state, for the poet's cradle rocked in a log-cabin in the Genesee's fertile valley, near Rochester. The workmen were blowing up the rocks and hurling out the earth where the Indians' corn had

yellowed, for the just-commenced Erie Canal.

His father was a pioneer who felled the trees for his humble house within the roar of the splendid Falls from whose spray a bard ought to have drunk inspiration to immortalize its hero—Sam Patch the high leaper, our parallel to Schiller's "Diver." The timely-wrought ballad is ignominious.

His parents came of English yeomen stock. The man was so lowly in station as to be bound out in service, a kind of slavery so antiquated, patriarchal and opposed to the Declaration of Independence, that the playful threat to impose the yoke on his son terrified any insubordination out of him. Young John submissively ran the gamut of clearing

and settling: trimming with "his little hatchet" the wild cherry trees felled by the axe, burning brush, chinking up the house walls, hoeing the corn into the frosty sods, and running to sleep in the garret. Exposed to the northwest blizzards, he and his brother snuggled up as the fine snow sifted in and powdered them; it is pathetic while mirthful to see them, clothes on arm and shoes in hand, rushing down-stairs to dress by the blaze of the undying huge wood fire on the hearth. Coal was as yet a mineral curiosity to set on the mantel-piece. Stoves came in later when anthracite was understood, and the two boys could thaw out after exposure in the snow-drifts, with both putting their feet from opposite sides in the oven of the *Franklin*. Such

homely incidents appear in Trowbridge's chronicles of this life, as remote to us as the Pilgrim Fathers'. Yet our winter is so often prolonged that the statement of snowballs in the oak base hollow in April sounds not far-fetched.

Of hale but not robust constitution, he was Fancy's child. He saw magic floriation in the frostings on the pane; heard the nymphs sing about the spring; and soon hummed spontaneous rhymes between the plow-handles. To him "writing and reading came by nature," for the inclination was irresistible to those in charge of his nurture mental after the physical: he seemed "one possessed." His sensible senior, looking around on the scarcely broken wilderness—which only a prophet could have ~~have~~ foreseen

as the seat of the great florist and seeds industry of our day—he said: "John wants education, does he? what good will that ever do the boy?" It was not given him to see that in this life, or the good the boy gave.

On the other hand, with feminine desire for amelioration, the fond mother held to a premonition, and, long after, while urging the young man verifying the promise, to be a church-goer, implored him to "go on writing poetry." Exceptional matron, for no one in that intellectual earth could reckon on a pittance for the unfortunate wielder of the pen—out of trade books. Artists, players and poets—rogues, in fact as in legal style.

The student had to console himself for the blue lookout by "the jingle without

the metal"—the music of the poetry obtainable a hundred miles from a library. Scott, Byron—whose advent drove the first off the course as he acknowledged his was but a shuffling nag to the indubitably racing barb; Shakespeare, that universal invader who went round the globe like his *Ariel;* Homer, by the medium of Pope; Milton, in "Paradise Lost"; Virgil, by the interlinear translation which taught some Latin; Schiller, Goethe and La Fontaine, by translations. It was not yet that he acquired French and German, those two crutches which enable the Asmodeus to pry up strange roofs.

But the illustrative scraps, in Blair's "Rhetoric," gratified and instructed him in the divers measures as well as subjects.

Then dropped in gradually, immature sprays of Tennyson, Keats, Browning, "too luxurious" for the bucolic tyro. Yet the florid Moore, by his precursor of Omar, in "Lalla Rookh," so infiltrated him with melody that subsequently he could lecture on that arabesque of Orientalism. But the School Speakers—absorbing all good things, in the absence of copyright stricture—made him believe that poetry, to be diffused, should be speakable before readable.

This belief, never quitting him, renders his rhymes sonorous and fluent, to be uttered to a half-circle of the bewitched in the open. Try it!

Dwell on the local points and color. For the Middle States and New England are so changed and travestied by the

foreigners' invasion that an old settler can with difficulty recognize natural features. As for the ones newly man-made, they are saddening and perplexing. The Italians and Portuguese have flaunted high colors; the French-Canadians old melodies, and even the Asiatics have festival days. The aspect in the first half of the last century offered no hint or sign of what was piercing the frigid crust: a spontaneous, indigenous poesy, true, brilliant in the void, relishable on the barrens, like that red manna liberally spreading the Polar snows. The novelty and total unexpectedness increased the zest with which it was soon greeted. Such novelty had been wanted, though not groped for, by any inherent thirst.

Observers like Channing, saw nothing

but the prosaic in "the cold climate, the flat scenery, and the wretched soil," struggling back to those from the Bay to "the lofty lands producing little men." Indeed, stern, obdurate realities were the fences, wanting mending, around the ungrateful lots, no walled-in gardens for the Muses pampered in the Olden World.

In Colonial days, no wild music but the Indian drum resounded, no song but his death-song. In Revolutionary ones, the hand on the grindstone "edging steel," as laments Freneau—who chanted under fire, for all that,—had no rest to scribble. Washington had to cheer his aids by singing such old English drolleries as "the Derbyshire Ram."

But, on Peace's doves cooing, our "Farmer's Boy" trimmed his oaten flute

or cornstalk fiddle, and an impulse to soften down hoar austerity set in. Ears whipped by the spring blasts, listened for other comfort than in the literary paragraphs in the *Farmer's Almanack.* Boys aching with the drudgery of chores, harked "to the call to paths unknown," and flouted the dogma that the world was but a greater country, as the State was an enlarged farm.

Toilers and tillers yielded to the growing craving for melody other than the lean, limited notes of our larks, robins, thrushes—feeble mockeries of the English warblers so named; as fowlers once hunted for the phœnix, our budding rhymers sorely longed to hear the nightingale, the poets' bird by pre-eminence, to die without reveling on which seemed a

terrible shame and is an irremediable loss.

Think of the lugubrious hanked-in Helicon, where Dr. Watts sat as Apollo! Luckily, the insinuative peddler came to the rescue of the doleful. This unconscious and unconscionable messenger of Euterpe—(language of the period)—contended stoutly with the Psalmist. He brought the petty song-sheets preserving folk-ballads and blunt pleasantries on apposite events not too old out of town. "The Poets' Corner" began to mend —the classic pieces gave way to native lays in lively measures. Dreariness was quenched; cheeriness kindled. The barn door was thrown down for the ball-room floor, for "the Boatman's Dance," "Jim Crow's 'Jump Jess So,'" or the "Cana-

dian Canoe Song." The county organ's Editor's box was lightly approached and the rough contribution deposited hopefully, and the new hand departed with a heart elate. In demolishing a benumbing, clogging, outworn past, as the British general said of the Homespuns' sires driving out the redcoats, "they very well knew what they were about."

Seekers for recreation, the few but earnest enliveners regenerated a lackadaisical country, where fairies dared not trip in the "rings," which came nevertheless; where to play Solitaire was to gamble with Old Hairy, and to whistle a jig was tantamount to stepping it.

The songs displacing the Psalter, more energetic than elevating, out-ranted the Refined "Spouter's Companion," with

its orthodox, "Marius at Carthage," "Warren Hastings Denounced," and "The Sentinel of Pompeii." The "pieces for speaking" rose and fell thick as the "snowing" of the pine, brightening up the tiresome, somber, brown and gray. The dogged plowman at last was shown the beauty in the shorn daisy and felt an unwonted tenderness, to his ingenuous surprise. The country of the Puritans was fascinatingly transfigured, like the scene Tom Moore expected to see here. The cold, raw bone had a delectable marrow.

We say, recitals: despite the admirable free school system—imitated all the world over since—many were still unable to read "book-English" fluently. They had to be read to. Our continuator of

the Last Minstrel of Europe, the unaffected and enthusiastic Carey, Dibdin and Bayley in one, engrossed the stage —called, untheatrically, platform—of the lecture-room, the Athenæum and the public hall.

What racking self-sacrifice, labor incessant for others, as were the material culture and culling; the back-breaking picking up of the apples, shaken down at neck-risk; packed for the London mart; our skating-ponds, stripped of ice to cool Brummell's champagne; our wintry days deprived of earned rest to peg plantation brogans; game for the Boston or city poulterers; idle pastime grudged. What paucity of recreation, too! The best was at the large shed dignified as the Assembly Room. The recitationist, with the ster-

eotyped "Warren's Address," "Clinton on Opening the Canal," "Rebecca relating the Attack on the Castle" and that tiresome Boy—who stood on the Burning Deck, climbed up under the Natural Bridge or Looked Aloft in the gallant cross-trees. Trowbridge yearned to introduce a novelty—to serve up other dishes than the permanent "English quail"; the representative American aspired to the native but unknown.

At thirteen, he was penning his vociferations to the scarecrows or confidences to the sap-kettle swinging from the pierced maple.

As habitual in the young, the highest peak was aimed at before the base hills were surmounted: our novice essayed an ode on "the Tomb of Napoleon." The

exile of St Helena had been brought back in his coffin to repose "among the French people he loved so well," a few years before. This successful upstart was the ambitious American's ideal. Instead of floating him, the ponderous eagle bore down the lyrist; he acknowledges that—in time, he perceived it was bosh. That is his own word; and thereby hangs a tale; bosh is Dutch for bad butter, and at that time our Goshen butter commanded the highest price in the European market. But our Milton was not born to remain mute and inglorious; a good-natured friend carried the script to the nearest newspaper office: "Hark from the Tomb" Napoleon's revived fame, and it resounded in organs really pleased to copy. A Chicago weekly made much of

the infant prodigy—the appreciated Chatterton, of the Excelsior State. Chicago was not then the Queen City of the West; there would have been a higher brand in the Louisville *Courier* or the New Orleans *Picayune*, adopting the bantling—but enough is as good as a feast—a little tap sends the new ship down the ways. The youth was assured that he had his foot on the Ladder and had but to mount. The bubble must have had some consistency with its iridescence to survive the transference. It might go farther. His pipe should blow others more alluring and more lasting. There *was* welcome to native talent. His lyre, girded with bay, would "lay down by his side," and not the proverbial "cup of cold poison" for the misunderstood.

Like so many of his sordid age, he was to take up the Passionate Pilgrim's staff and begin the assent of that hill, where a Song-bird calls on the summit but the way is strewn with poets petrified when disheartened or listening to the voice of common sense bidding them to get back to the shovel and the hoe. To him, the beautiful was the needful; but the common order accepted the gold in the brick, and charily owned to the improvement by its being minted as an exquisite coin or elaborated into a brilliant jewel.

Genuine merit does not so much doubt the opinions of friends and dearer critics as question the weight of those rulings. That is why genius boldly tempts the "Lion's Mouth,"—Franklin, at the printing office, believes in his article when it

is unwittingly placed on his case before him to be set up in type. Our adventurer awaited an opportunity to test in the crucible held by an unfeeling hand. Besides, one is not born an American without resenting the antiquated delusion that there is not a price for everything, in literature.

Clapping of hands or slaps on the back in the circle of mates and the hum of delight and pride around the parlor table are the proverbial piper's pay—nothing convertible into goods. Editorial thanks are numbered with this same willow-leaf currency. Shocking as was the spirit of tontines and state lotteries, a phase survived in the mode of "vailing," that is, rewarding the men who, in the guise of the newsboys we see by legion, waited all

the year for the end which they had a traditional authority to claim a varying stipend. On presenting a New Year's Address, the subscribers returned a present. This address gradually assumed a set form: it was a broadside, in rhyme, conveying thanksgiving, indulging in a forecast political, local, and domestic; commonly the newspaper editor wrote it and many a notable looks back to these annual feats—which have their value in curio-collections—without any regret save that they have not done so much better in the declining years.

The county journal editor was unable or disinclined to trot out his "racker"; he had no assistant; and perchance he wished to harrow the complacency of his subscribers. He proposed to have the

address composed among them; he offered a prize in the shape of a splendidly bound volume, then announced, to the author of the annunciatory page found pre-eminently fit. At the promise of Griswold's "Poets of America," one pair of eyes was distended to "popping." It was John T. Trowbridge's, for this volume promised to comprise all his desires.

The divine inflation seems to have confined itself to the one bard; the competition was narrow; the race was "Eclipse first—and the rest nowhere." But after the appointment as herald of the New Year, the winner met vexation; the laurels withered; in plain, it left not a leaf behind. The editor hemmed and ha'd; the prize book did not come on from the town. To make a brief story of

it, the curmudgeon compromised for the costly token by handing over a dollar or so. Griswold, appealed to, could not have done more scurvily. But the First Dollar earned by one's self! The Mint coins such only once! Phillips' "Splendid Shilling," then famed among poetasters, paled its sheen.

But you will not hastily and ignorantly conclude that this illusion turned the traveller on his way? alas, the mirage of twenty is often the vision of the Promised Land reached at eighty.

Trowbridge was at manhood's gate. On him and brother, by the father's death, was placed the maintenance of the homestead and their mother, who was to be blessed with nearly five-score. Means of communication were strengthening if not

multiplying; farming was remunerative —given indefatigable temper and unalterable health. But John was averse to perpetuating the monotonous and arduous work. The weakness of sight, perhaps not counteracted by so much study, necessitated such a brave step as Dana took and to which the world owes the next book to "Crusoe" as a veritable seaman's revelation. Trowbridge might have been the lustier, and America again congratulated on a still realistic but more poetical "Before the Mast."

However, he hesitated like the ass of the scholiast between the two livelihoods presented by the country midway in the last century: to peddle or to canvass. Deciding on the latter as more genteel, he commenced beating up the neighbors to

dispose them to purchase one knows not what "Life of Washington" by instalments. But as an urchin going to the dentist's with an aching tooth, has the pang fly on the doorstep, he flinched at the first possible client's and turned home, determined never to be a "solicitor."

To be a well incurs irrigation; his education, hap-hazard as it was, created him a wizard; he must, therefore, become a sower broadcast of the wisdom: Teach school. We have outstepped Europe; there, the boy must be a soldier or a churchman; here, he teaches "the young idea how to *shoot*——ink or lead."

The schoolmaster, in the Thirteen States, occupied the exalted post of the priest in the Middle Ages. Dickens found that every man not dubbed Colonel,

Judge or Doctor, was a Professor. To be a Professor was superior to Poet.

John trimmed his quill for staid lines and, leaving the farm to his senior, went over to Lockport, a creation of the Canal, coeval with his growth, to preside over the district school, "classical," if you please, of thirty souls. Some of the souls were in heads higher than his own. You will find details of this trial in "The Little Master."

On what had he read up to inform the ignorant? Mixed odds and ends to furnish what Jeremy Taylor calls the scaffolding for a building. Rollin and Josephus certainly counterpoised "The Pirate of the Gulf" and "the Pirate's Own Book," confessedly "thought good!" He had also digested more useful knowledge than

"the British Poets" supplied. Happily, he had French, from a Canadian, provincial but close enough for the rustics, and was reading German. Fortunately the concurrent new school in France, Hugo, Dumas and their imitators, dosed their romances with history; more than one of their disciples can give assurance that the school examiner would condemn the pupil fortified with this palatable mixture.

But the occupation was not remunerative, while irksome; like Goldsmith, he deserted the village; instead of a flute he meant to whistle his way through the world. We had no "lazy Scheldt," but many tumbling rivers spun the mill wheels and in the manufacturers' families light literature was in request.

Visitors from the Old Country marvelled at the reading habit, if frivolous, done by the Americans, particularly the women. Indeed, without the mandarins knowing of the extent though deploring it, the manufacture was immense in Boston and New York, of reading matter. The bulk came from England, but not from choice of taste; simply that gave the printer reprint copy, an advantage over manuscript, though in a (school-) masterly hand.

John T., arriving in the Empire City, found it an empirical one as regards æsthetics. Nobody asked questions about the author—but would the emanation *sell?* If the book would not go into the twenty-five or fifty cent form, it was chopped to fit. If an author obtained

a following, all the novels in his style were ascribed to him. Hence, James, (G. P. R.) and Bulwer-Lytton seem the only English romancists, as Dumas and Sue the only foreign ones.

Our adventurer had a guiding star of value. Or say it was Minerva's bird; it found an ark. This ark was the office of the "*Sunday Times and Noah's Messenger.*" It was in the Publisher-Printers' quarter, Ann and Nassau street corner its nucleus. This namesake and descendant of the first navigator, Mordecai M. Noah, was a celebrity; a Jew who had served the country as consul, and worked worthily for our realm of letters while never dropping the prelude to what has become the Zionist Movement. He was a rotund, genial gentleman, the reverse

of Dr. Johnson in seeing the necessity of even the humblest writer to live.

He examined the Japhet in search of a father for his witlings. The eyes in the upper head bespoke intelligence; the nose, acuteness; the large mouth, inclined to droop the lower lip like his own, meant humor; the whole, while simple and not paled by the city air, favorably moved, and made him more kindly than usual, if that could be. But poetry was lead; essays were brass; short stories were silver—if not gold. Had he a story? The new-comer, like all in the first flight, *had* a feather loose in his wing. It was not so very short, too long for a newspaper, unless a serial; or he would have brought it instead of the sheaf of verses.

Mr. Noah continued the lesson on what his *Times* required, and concluded a charming interview—from which modern editors may take the cue—with the business-like advice:

"Revise your novel; take it to Williams Brothers, publishers at the corner yonder, of the *Morning Star*, *Yankee*, and I know not what. They devour copy like the Fiery Furnace; only, the deserving children are left, shining with glory, if not with the shekels. Leave the Manuscript for 'Harry' Williams, that is, the junior, Henry L.—with mention of my name. We are friends."

The Williams Brothers had a branch of origin in Boston, but to reprint "no end of" English books, they had a floor-room of presses running. If Hoe had

built his colossal machines at that day and there were paper enough, it would have been the "United States Book Trust" foredone. The applicant left his story, somewhat awed by his tilting at veteran jousters of London and the European Continent.

Finally, he entered upon Prof. "Harry" Williams' affable presence just as that decider of literary fame and fortune was unrolling the work sent on "approbation." This fortuity was auspicious, no doubt. Both smiled at the coincidence. Instead of conversing, they chatted. Williams was not only a master printer but deep in current letters; he had crossed to England and had the skimming of the "advance sheets." He agreed with Noah that there was no sale for poems. For

general fiction the house had the first look at foreign productions, saying nothing of bonds with London printing-houses by which their reproductions of notable Paris and Brussels successes would come over in the stereotype plates ready to lay on the presses! What chance had native abilities, then?

"Great—provided the subject is apt. Nearly all of our profitable novels home-brewed, are hits on the nail: our alert public do not have time to have allusions, however pertinent, lucidated. As the Cockney was understood at home when he said of our winters, that more snow fell here than would fill St. James' Park—about as big as the Hoboken Elysian Fields, by the way!—so our many readers tell the time by the City Hall Clock out

there and reckon all height by Trinity steeple."

In spite of this exordium, he, still revolving the roll, judged offhand, that it would suit. This was cavalier, for the petitioner did not know that the publisher had the knack of pondering writings. Years after, the sum of his experience was that "a book sells because it sells," but the *flair*, the tact, the plunk-plunk of the sound ripe melon is perceptible instantly to the predestined expert.

It was the settling hour, for plainly, the publisher did not want to be dispossessed of the manuscript of which he had "seizing." The commonplace practical discussion on brain work suggested an amercement on his conjecture. The Johnny Raw stammered his expectation

that something like a hundred dollars might bring them into more accord.

The dictator smiled conciliatingly—being still youngish himself and a *little* of an author, and replied:

"We are not in the habit of paying our authors so highly for their first works—" (Or, often so, for their later ones? eh?)

He tendered twenty-five dollars for the four or five quires in his hand. Nominally it was precisely the sum for which "Paradise Lost" was exchanged! At this moment, over the ocean, Dumas and Sue were getting ten cents a word! accounted Abomination, but read everywhere!

Spite of the "come-down," the beginner accepted, as in fishing he had strung on the first catch, though a minnow, to en-

courage the others to pile on. Besides, he was soon to learn that payment was beggarly among the purveyors of Paper-covered novels; and for translations even less. Foreign cheap labor counted there —New York swarmed with political refugees and black sheep of almost royal flocks. That was not all the detriment, the publishers were not sure; they failed in their stinted pledges; they paid in notes warranting excessive discount; they "went to Texas"; the receivers in bankruptcy favored the printers, binders, and stationers, and struck off the author's debt—of honor; as if but for his scroll, the workmen would have had any work to go upon!

Necessarily, though thus fully occupied, and yet doing newspaper items in made

intervals, the struggler had to have recourse to petty handicrafts, adopting them with the multifarious readiness of the American-born. Another woe arose from the careless methods of the popular publishers; to save the paltry copyright fee they failed to register, and authors, robbed by them, could not retrieve in time by renewing their right. The premium was on the author dying young!

The magazine editors were a shade blacker. One, highly respectable, whose crocodile wept that Poe should have been ill rewarded, told our subject on his meek demand for the consideration for a printed article, that the honor should be enough.

Chafing at the injustice, the adept sought a new and more fertile field.

In the authors' restaurants, Windust's,

(acute misnomer!) Florence's, Brown's Chophouse or the Pewter Mug, they were wont to chant a parody on MacKay:

"Tell me, ye winged winds that round me play:
Is there a spot where authors get their pay?"

"From the North cometh the Light." He looked towards Boston. The Williams Brothers could have told him that they knew the Trimontaine City from when they set up types in its offices, and that all but the purblind saw that with the transportation lines concentrating on the Hudson's mouth, the days when Massachusetts Bay was the only haven for European vessels, was over. Their prescience was fifty years too soon, but it was correct.

Manhattan was the hunting-ground of

the free-lances from all the world over; what a conglomerate band; Ingraham, Judson, Herbert, Snelling, Fayette, Robinson, Duganne, Wallace; they were pilasters if not pillars; they sustained the temple of Universal Education. They starved, pouring out the honey for the banqueted multitude.

But Boston was biased by the Concord Clique. There would be no eluding this octopus had not the arms been diverse and individual: they did not conflict. They rated themselves supernal. One, Alcott, said to Emerson, another: "You are always talking of Plato or Pythagoras or Mahomet!—why don't you say a word of ME?" By happy chance, the young man who had eschewed the "blood-and-thunder" pirates of Gotham, fell not to

the sophistry of the Solons. Not "red," he would not be blue though a little drab, after the manner of the "Quaker poet." For Whittier was straightforward and plainspoken like himself, and loved country life in the same unaffected way. The Dons continued to drawl out the platitudes, more or less beguilingly, while the intruder devoted himself to please the untutored. He felt pity for those who found no assuagement but in the cascade leaping over their heads or in the gutter-flow. He aimed to supply some beverage at about heart's level.

Hence, the vital poems for general audiences, and the stories that formed our later generation and continue the brave work. The personages spoke no set dialect—where is there such in our

confines? but each had idiosyncrasies as we know others possess while not admitting the foible in ourselves. The articles have a purpose, a keel that steadies them, and conduces to the forward course. They were flowers from our soil: not imported ones on which glistered the serpent's slime, or beneath which crawled a venomous creature. No highwayman, and as Pat would say, *they* were not gentlemanly! no morals of Mayfair. The heroes were not unvaryingly artists or authors—for the mass still held the old and trite tenet that it was a higher duty to pay debts than to write novels or paint pictures. We nodded to the Yankees and other acquaintances who were not Sam Slicks any more than they were Hosea Bigelows. Between their parts,

the author did not air the hieratic diction where a mare's nest was equine nidification (fact!) and the "verecund" writer a modest one. The readers were addressed as thoughtful, not as unthinking and wanting to be coaxed out.

The New York "freshman" held his own among the college graduates; the methodical publishers discerned his worth; they joined in the praise of the self-lauded crew, but they employed him. The "hack" was become a *Flying Childers*. Theodore Parker, from his pulpit, spoke pointedly of "the exemplary country-bred youth who aspires to something better than working on a farm at twelve dollars a-month." The exodus to the city was not unheeded in the last half-century.

His resolution to succeed was like the wedge with an energetic maul behind it. Did he but get a couplet inserted in a "close corporation" magazine, it opened the passage for a sonnet or canto. Where the short story entered, it forwarded a serial running for months. His "Jack Hazard" stuck to a periodical like a tug to a steamer for years even after the publication was rebuilt and relaunched.

It was the happy medium between the wild-fire of the New York Bohemians and the cold-drawn oil of the Brook Farm Community.

Perseverance as of his own heroes obtained a post—the assistant was soon manager. He was to be conductor of an influential organ. Already he outstripped Hawthorne's three hundred a-year.

Under various pseudonyms, "Paul Creyton," "Augustus Holmes" (the coincidence with "Augusta Holmes" is remarkable) "Jackwood," "Harvey Wilder," one may collect some strays under one head—the miscellaneous transcriber of events developed science, arts, and manufactures, intruding in mills, foundries, workshops, to represent the secret doings fresh to the uninitiated. Nothing curious escaped him: remarked the odd jingle of "The Charcoal Man." This lost street-cry tells of the day before the kerosene-can helped to light fires and they were "built" of paper or shavings, light wood, charcoal, or hard wood, and lastly the coal. Impossible to learn this risible piece without being tempted to recite it, and it convulses any gathering, with its domes-

tic images and the quaint melody in "Charco'! charco'!" Such gives the only desirable popularity—that following you, not rising, but dying out before. The like of gems of this quality appears in the principal magazines, betokening his fixed devotion to fine art at the same time as his longer works in prose testify to intense pressure to affirm his views. The fastidious *Atlantic*, "The Great Khan" of our realm of letters, besought poems from his white-heat forge.

Type of the indefatigable American, with all this production in so many channels, he found time to go more than once to Europe; even then, he would not relax but in correspondence and noting for future efforts, let no advantage go by.

The lyrist may dwell in a bomb-proof

from politics; but from the fundamental arguments never. It was peace. Yet the cat's-paws that foreran the tempest—the Black Squall of the Anti-slavery Agitation—began to ruffle the serenity. Assistant-editor of a Boston daily, a fugitive slave case constrained him to dash off an article only too fervent with the natural impulses engendered by freedom in a free man. The jet started a broad flame. The editor hastened back to find his office threatened by a mob and his aid in a marvel at the to-do his lines had raised. He was of the large body that forswore the principles of old and were willing for a parting of the ways. But Trowbridge was for the Union—right or wrong! He had friends among the Abolitionists but not their narrow views. He tackled the

unsettled problem of miscegenation, antedating "The Octoroon" with a less rude ardor. As drama and story, "Neighbor Jackwood" holds a place in the special papers of the outbreak of the "Crisis."

The war breaking out, the magnet was located in the debatable ground between the armies. His stories were to become historical. Each was a link in a chain which suffered no shortening. In "Cudjo's Cave," the reader dwelt with the emancipated bondman; in sequels, with the soldiers; in "Coupon Bonds" with the financiers who bore the brain-heaviest burden in our agony. Fair play makes these vital records read as well by the Suwanee as the Merrimac.

Trowbridge's "Drummer-boy" relegated to the shade the spectral one sup-

posed to haunt the village rim and recal the Minute-men's summons in the Revolution. As patriotic as "Waverley," like that, the War stories, forestalling that reconciliation amazing to the unregenerated world, constrained the Southerner to clasp hands with the Northerner as soon as the guns were stacked. Honor, bravery, faith, constancy—were common to both parties;—the motive in his characters was as the gold thread that traverses a motley web, after the fabric fades and falls apart, the metal remains good as ever.

He foresaw that with the unparalleled constitution of the newest amalgam of the Anglo-Saxon with heaven knows what elements, our Alexander victorious would fraternize with conquered Darius and the seam be cemented by both hands uncleav-

ably. The confidence that a just cause must triumph is so firmly expressed that to doubt is guilt; the hand remained tender spite of the callousing musket-stock. In Trowbridge's "secession" stories you own that

"The life may be true
And hearts beat the same under Gray coats or Blue.

These important deviations did not keep him from his predestined track, endeared by the most pleasant felicitations; even his one audience clamored for more "pieces to speak." On top of that, the rising sea in England, of which Howitt the Quaker, Knight, Chambers, all the benevolent vulgarizers, were the beacon-buoys by their organs, delightedly circulated the Trowbridge verses. The Penny

Magazines were wound up in the wild American vine and the consumers exulted in the fruit—for high out of reach to them were the hothouse grapes. The cities might prefer the lucubrations of the theosophical, transcendental, academical, but these posies were dewy-fresh, bright in self-tints, as pluckings off the wayside or in rarely invaded nooks. Even when bereft of the stamp, a welcome "Trowbridge," the smack of pungency, like pennyroyal, classed one with the others for the social gatherings. Still it is flattering to the palate to identify an unnamed delicacy, and the reader finally foils the lingering scorn of the author and the prejudice that brain-work should remain gentlemanly, that is, gratuitous! It is said that the cut of the chisel reveals

the arch-sculptor; the "Trowbridge" selections began to be set apart. Each had its individuality as a "sport," but all pointed back to the main stem: truth, sense, electrifying fire, accumulative force as you reiterated them, suggestions, like the comprehensive sermon, that "hit a man somewhere to do him good." The pastoral recognized features with glee as the town-pump, hitching-post or liberty-pole, for such landmarks once were.

A fellow-feeling told us plump that this youngster who had lifted himself out of the Slough of Despond, was not happy until he pulled out the rest of the human chain.

Granted that our idol'd fame is not linked with that of the master of the Great Mutual Admiration Society, called

"the New England School," where all the scholars were principals! but while those professors were mummies, the Byrons, Poes and Burnses are vital voices. We had enough of the formulated exercises —we gladly embraced what lines could be talked out, mouth to ear, to the multitude. We lads could retain and repeat *them* in the woodshed, in the cornfield, by the swimming-pool side. Well, perhaps it is as the Old Grand-Army man said of Lincoln and Washington—he preferred the former, as he had "grown up with him."

It is said that Americans welcomed poetry, as nothing of the sort alleviated their tedious days' surroundings. But there is a good deal of poetry as well as "human nature in man"; the Brothers Grimm affirm that poetry precedes prose;

that common folks lisp in numbers. At any rate, they are not deaf to the charmer, sooner if he does not charm too learnedly.

No fashionable "fad" has the run of recitations—and if it has died out amid culture, it thrives in the West, where, in fact, the Down-easters are homed. And the force is not limited by the sea: in the English penny readings Trowbridge's selections, are acclaimed from Dover to Glasgow. "Darius Green" is a friend to our youthful cousins. They were also fagged to death with Elizabethan, Plutarchian and heaven knows what "—alistic" classics. If none there would answer as to reading an American *book*, the unanimity is complete as to Trowbridge pages for utterance satisfying the demand for

support, encouragement and self-help. He does not say old things in the old, old way or a new one—but new things in their new way.

The mirror he holds up to mankind and nature is one of those chased with a delicate design; reflection comes forth confined in that pattern, blended with its own harmoniously. The defining improves the picture. But this governance does not impair; it is not the fine garb that deters one's approach—irreproachable remains approachable. His Hamlets are not told by the spirits raised to keep their distance.

This unstilted language caught us at the breath; it was our own, only we could not "handle" it, as the superior did, freely, patly, stirringly. At the hearing it also

penetrated the stolid, "solid men," who retained seats for the whole lecture season. On leaving, the reserved went home sociably, like the inseparable "Vagabonds," by the zigzag lane of fancy—gallantly and cheerily, pairing as "Roger and I."

Adroitly preserving the proportions that please so description should not cloud the action as smoke obscures a battle, Trowbridge was in the front of our naturalistic recorders: he, among the earliest, sowed what is now frayed, as a term—atmosphere. When our landscapists exhibited in Europe, their mastery was acknowledged but their forms and tints disputed. Impossible for an Englishman, who sees all darkly as through a fog, to confess the gorgeous hues of the fall in a forest, or the sublimity of the White Mountains to

which the Grampians are foot-hills. So as the sites have been sterilized by that great, merciless vulgarizer, Manufacture, none will see, save in these accurate pages, the views trampled on by wooden shoes and naked exotic feet. But the nonagenarians who also sailed matchboxes with a feather for sail on the Frogpond of Boston Common, tried to outstrip the chipmunk over the wide rock wall, stood under the Maine pines that make the Scotch ones mere whipstocks, and shot a chute on the feeders of the Concord, have the past loveliness resuscitated. If on leaving the playhouse, we bear away the melancholy Jacques, and not a leafy branch, we know the scene painter was deficient in impressiveness. In Trowbridgeiana, is always displayed :—

"The art that changes and mends Nature—
The art itself is nature."—*Winter's Tale.*

Is it necessary—is it always satisfactory to know the real existence of the poet whose figments become figures in our mental world? it is unseldom that the man leads a life as romantic as what he imagines. Would Grace Darling's name sound more mellifluous—would her gallant deed show up more illustriously if she herself wrote any of the score panegyrics upon it? At the same time, one may confess that the reading has an additional impression to hear that our author, in his recounts of heroism and daring-doings could draw from his own bosom. At the risk of his life, in the face of the shrinking crowd, he plunged forward over the leathery ice of a treacher-

ous pond and rescued a lad in an exposed danger-spot. Everything in ratio. Falconer to his shipwreck, Cervantes in his Lepanto, Michel Angelo in the breach of Florence walls, Patrick Henry's speech courting the dungeon, he who also ventures his life for a brother puts himself on a par with these, in due proportion, and his ode may be laid on the same shelf as their epics.

It is only fair and purely in keeping with our peculiar dry humor, lifting the act into higher relief while apparently isolating it, that the life-saver frankly adds that while the voice of the lookers-on was syllabled: "I wouldn't have done that for ten million dollars!" as old Uncle Joshua flung the cooling drop on the enthusiasm with: "That boy is our worst

melon-thief and mout as well have been drowned!"

How does he look, this writer who pleases us so by his devices? Ah, yes, Shakespeare's playfellows were responding to an universal and eternal inquiry when they offered "the counterfeit presentment" of their Gentle Will in the best portrait available. Our wild-wood note singer is the same as he ever was, on the downhill as breasting the upward slope. Only, as in the dissolving views, it is a change of the dark hair to white—the flowing beard for the military mustaches and the goatee of the War times.

The same open face and clear, fearless eyes, undiminishable in lustre; the contour has the American elongation inasmuch as the forehead is high. No sage

has a more intellectual mold. The beam of that kindly glance has always been directed forward when not upward. The motto of his state: "*Excelsior!* Higher!" is in repetition there. The mouth is fine but liberal; it is rather Swift and Sterne, no just pun! than Rabelaisian, but one thinks of Falstaff when he repented and was to live a gentleman. Liquorish? Oh, dear, no! the temperance in the works is ingrown; yet, with that irrepressible amusement which will surge up, there is a mention somewhere, by himself, that he was cured of an indisposition by the sterling old remedy—hard cider cup. The virginal snowy white frame is not chilling; on the contrary, it speaks as does the wreath slowly disappearing in April—of the springtide ever returning.

Here is a man who made many friends not merely by his writings but by his companionship; and yet never was the tag like those who formed the Chinese jingler, of "the Brook Farm," to which allusion has been made; when touched, he tolled out his own note and did not chime with the peal. He was a John Blunt then, as his frequent frankness indicates! Ay, and never lost by it. By dint of tacking up memorial tablets all over the town, the sojourner is given the conviction that it is an abode of celebrities; but, ten to one, if you ask the denizen for a testimonial of Trowbridge's services, this very man would beat his breast and gratefully and proudly answer:

"I am his work! his stories — his poems made a man of me!"

There is no more space—especially as this detains the reader from enjoying the feast of reason and seasoning here-coming—to expatiate, and it is futile, for Trowbridge obeyed the injunction of his friend Thoreau: "Is not the poet bound to write his own biography?"

It is entitled "My Own Story"; and it is not the least entertaining of the hundred others. The trend is always upward; the firm step is always of the man seeing his goal and taking untoward events as "all in the day's work." This man has not all light, but like us, has a shadow. But he would not look on that black side. You will see that the base literary drudgery was but the rough getting the hand in for finer things; blow the bellows before you hold the iron or swing the

sledge! You will see fortitude in the trials in New York, and the transfer to Boston, where Dr. Holmes assured just such another fledgling that "our writers are poor as rats." It is as well to record that the good adviser gave his applicant a bit of counsel Trowbridge lacked; instead of squandering his growing reputation upon several *aliases*, he enforced "Keep to one signature."

The young student who aims to be a leader in letters points out the modern and American course diametrically opposed to the old one: "To be reviewed favorably, cultivate the reviewers." But the reviewers here carry no weight with a public which reads no reviews for their tastes to be warped or wafted. On the other hand, Trowbridge acted on the

Cleveland principle: "Perseverance is better than *pull*." Depend upon it, the editor, not the proprietor also, in using matter in which he benefits is untrue to his employer, and though justice has leaden soles, it overtakes in the long run. But one can guard against the dishonest; it is stupidity that baffles the most acute.

Can a reliable conclusion be drawn from the Trowbridge career, as shown in his progress for the public betterment? It is a question each time left to the recipient to decide and appraise. By the multiplicity of employers, this busy bee prevented any one controlling his entire subsistence and so preserved his moral independence. But, as his song asserts hopefully, the hand extended with trust in fellow man, often meets a helping one.

Drawing confidence in his experience, and having his inspiring verses by heart, the reader of this and the ensuing lines may dare the future and expect no less honorable and compatible return for endurance, application and unremitting production.

As the founder of the Boys' Story, as understood in America, where it sprung perfect, John T. Trowbridge must be cited. "Ofer the Water," and in former times, authors wrote for those having gone through the same educational course; they gave their leisure—not their service—hours; their level was above the boyish flights; they soared into the empyrean when the air upon earth was good enough for the majority. They bore disregard

for youth as deep as the American youth's failing of irreverence for age. They held that energy was noble but not that "Idleness and non-value to the fellow-citizen" was base. They did not believe that a boy's heart may dwell in many a man. They expected a perpetual treading in the made footsteps, in the grooved and graven way of the mule train in the Andes.

Precisely as the pap's old clothes were cut down and made up for the scion, so for his reading—grumblingly allowed, instead of nothing being too good for him—as since—anything was good enough. Our author was the first to enlarge on the sound reasoning in the ancient couplet:

> "Cloth of gold, do not despise,
> When thou art wed with cloth of Fries."

Hence his novels became not only endeared to our *growing-ups*, but to far-off children, being translated into the limits of our tongue, mainly the mother-German. These trial-balloons, much imitated, proved the accomplishment of the most difficult exactions in a merciless circle: the demure and the decorous. The work has to run the gauntlet, not of the class aimed at—fickle, unaware of its own mind, repulsing the hale for the spiced—but the parents, uncle, aunt, parson and school-teacher. None were lenient, few but fastidious, and so exacting. The subject usually came through beaten out, and lifeless. That book stood out unique to be readable at the table where all the family gathered—an American innovation, papa resigning his old-time

autocracy—or allowed in the ingle or the window-bay instead of the orthodox "Sunday book." Romance blurred and distorted, and ought to be clad in drab holland, metaphorically, as the best room furniture actually.

Solely on this lukewarm *sagé*-tea, the victims would have grown up flabby, mealy-mouthed hypocrites, but a secret counter-agent saved them. On the sly were circulated copies of a stuff as injurious, though at the other extreme: "Mysteries," "Wanderers" who left the straight path, Italian banditti, German goblins,—to combat which Scott was admitted, till "too much 'Ivanhoe' wearied," But into the lists where the Black Unknown Knight reigned, dashed the native champions—The Trowbridge Juveniles.

The qualities were manifest to the elders, and they could not impeach the fun that made their set mouths relax, and the natural points tickle them; they pardoned mischief which was due to high spirits and was always condoned for by proper conduct. Odd that when men were ardent and stubborn for free speech and free press, vivacity and gaiety were frowned upon for boys, and the women throttled all boisterousness with their pudding-bag strings. Versatility was the terror of the humdrum and only dismal mottoes were worked on the monotonous samplers. To be "oblivious of the obvious" was happiness.

The Trowbridge budget was a veritable "Wonderful Sack" to capture the rustic, who found in it that nature was fluid and

not fixed. Prejudices, enjoined inertia, subservience, all vanished at the sound of this voice vaulting the chairs of the *reserved* few to reach the plebeian back seats, and the "standees." The satirists, "America (that is, a hundred miles around *the Hub*), sensual and avaricious," quailed at the declaration of a new independence, that capacity found the opportunity—that a man did shape his fortune however rough-hewn by others. Trowbridge only broadened this theme in his many stories for progressive youth.

As Bay State bred and Boston born, the writer contests the "sensual" but the "avaricious" must stand. An age anterior to the quip at "the Mighty Dollar," the rough bawler of the Lament of Captain Kidd, pointedly begged the attention

of the Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard skippers to the moral: "Don't for the sake of gold, lose your soul!"

It is something gained for the nation where the Golden Rule still is obeyed above the rule of gold. Buoys on the tide of literature, these works, in any form, trace the right channel; there is haven at the end if you make for it. You learn that it is better to row than drift, though toilsome; better to sail than row, as you utilize nature; but far ahead of all, to fit yourself to steer. For if this modern Sparta has a mission, it is to furnish the guides, directors, supervisors for other races to retrieve the Garden of Eden.

The ballads that you read annexed, did not command the critics' notice but, copied numerously, the remote news-letter

furthered their admirers' desire. The ground was natural if not "naturalistic."

The tolerated fiction, "company" novels jarring with chivalric—dilated on lack-lustre life in stately halls, with the only comedy that of passages below-stairs, of "Little Marchionesses" and Jeames de la Pluches.

So the delineations of home doings, New England scenery, habitual acquaintances—these startled the readers of bombast-fustian. They had glimpses of the sort, sketches, but uprose figures defined as by the old Dutch masters, right to a shoestring, every hue bright and shimmering. The cultured flavor might be absent, but how inimitable and enjoyable the tang of the butternut, the lush frost-cured barberry, the savor of the Roxbury

russet! Tears ceased for "Crazy Jane" Shore and envy for the "Laura Matildas" of cockneydom, for what they had repulsed as vulgar sprang up attractive and engaging in "Neighbor Jackwood" and their "Neighbors' Wives." The New England Mitford was among them, virile, true and lasting. The thread of such disclosures, sweet and fragrant, "climbed all over one," like the forest honeysuckle.

The student in versification must notice the meet diction; no long-drawn words to extend the sweetness—for, to use a pertinent if homely analogy, nothing but molasses candy is the better for being too fine-spun; these words are never too "big for the age's mouth." It is not the refined white sugar but the clarified maple-sap, sweet enough for babes but

strong enough for strong men. The gathering was obtained in the "freeze" and watchfully strained in the heat and smoke. The author does not ride the high horse that spurns the earth, but the Pegasus who once was harnessed with the plowhorse, and pulled his share of the furrow. Holmes sneered at this unpretentious manner as that of "Mr. Smith and Mrs. Brown." Such may not be the volume for the bookcase under glass, but it is that hearty, wholesome dainty which passes from hand to hand, like the pound apple affording all the ring of boys a bite.

There may be "fewer faults with greater beauties joined"—elsewhere—but this was the regale on the platform, on the stoop, and the post-office piazza,

"while the mail was coming in." His native flowers may not allure the nymphs but they tease Giant Despair out of his lair.

The most agreeable course for language acquisition is the oral one. For style, write out—for parleying, recite. Kossuth enchanted our fathers by an English learnt in bawling Shakespeare until the rhythm bound him to the proper intonation and accent.

It is useless to hide the "Open Sesame!" now. It was the balmy unction carefully churned, skimmed and remolded from the new writer that made the surprising and eventful plots and exciting characters pass muster. In the last two or three decades American drollery has made the circuit of the globe, but the

samples our subject lavished were rare and astonished; he was an anticipator.

American humor makes the girdle of the world, but our later sort was anticipated by our author. Never since the ancients laughed over the chase of the "Golden Ass," with all its imitations, came up so superior a parallel as in the "Two Biddicut Boys" and one dog—such a dog! In pursuing that tricky animal, the Damon and Pythias of humble life burst through an Odyssey fraught with hindrances overcome by sheer courage and persistent, impregnated with fun as a lubricator.

This is naming but one specimen; others will come up in a rim of mirth.

Those unaware will never divine what rubbish this besom swept away.

The faintly lingering and timorous repulsion of verses is due to the time when, as Latin was the refuge for what ought not to be said in a live tongue, unchaste phrases must lie hid in metre and involutions. That was why Montgomery was gulped and Byron's "Hebrew Melodies" strained at.

In the poetry as well as in the prose, what our people look for as to their liking, since the "Pilgrim's Progress" solaced their hearts, appears without arrogantly proclaiming itself, the sound moral. It is not cold and pulseless like that statue bidden to the profligate's banquet, but human, exemplification of honor, honesty, gallantry, thorough sense, stanch affection, and unflagging loyalty to the country. The standfast faith is prominent,

that what is for the best is closely around about us, right here on the all-comprehensive earth that yields with the same abundance red and white onions as roses; and bids the pie-plant flourish or ever the snowdrop delays melting.

Furthermore, if all Trowbridge's heart is not in his voice, as you follow it, you will find his winning frankness and honesty in his revelations; "My own Life," tracing all that era, not complimentary to Americans, which saw the alien replace at the mills those country maidens whom Charles Dickens glorified as the noblest spectacle in America—handmaidens who served morality and industry while they spun.

"'Tis not a life,—
'Tis but a piece of childhood,"

boyhood and manhood as unaging. You will see by this where he drew the unfailing store of refreshment in his poems and tales, the heroism of the plain country boy. In Boston, he was constrained to depend on his pen, but it was not the standard English steel and the ink was no more strange; it was the wild-goose quill and the poke-berry sap to write such veracity, and draw such life-like actors as run the mill, scout in war-times and carve out a career. In this freedom hence he stands out from his coevals, a Mark Antony—"Cæsar being very much like Pompey." After all, in the target of popular approval, he hits plum'-centre, with his ball run, like the old hunter's, in his own mold.

As story-teller and truth-teller, and a

speaker, eye to eye, our wishes have borne good luck, for he is not spoilt at sixty; he still is buoyed up by the same hope, lofty, holy, unworldly, which he impressed on his contemporary youth and their successors. Before the War, he was a pilot who taught captains; now he is the past-admiral whose counsels are sought and heeded. In short, his hand is on the helm.

In this sedentary age, when man is always sitting—at the desk, the table, in the motor-carriage,—the idea is too general that all can be done by the hand on the telephone-sender. Men stay away from political meetings and declare the art of "speechifying" is lost. Without diverging to politics, one little fact will gainsay all that. Lincoln's stump-speak-

ing laid the track that had its terminus in Washington, remember! and with a better schooling, but no less "live-voice" appeals, the orator Bryan amazed the Conventions—he devoted his youth to studying native eloquence, and his riper days to debating and recitation. This elocutionary process, disparaged by the obtuse and the indolent, elevated, distinguished and made Trowbridge inviting, when not inglorious poets were feeding the worm in lumber-rooms. The days we conned might not occupy space in Cyclopaedias, but they spangle the "Readers," which you will not find now but well-thumbed, "the First to the Sixth." Phœbus may spurn McGuffey as not euphonious in name, but he was by his selections a benefactor. They were step-

ping-stones from the "little Red School-house" to the great White One at Washington. But Mrs. Grundy could not transfix anything inadmissible in them; so Trowbridge's were snapped up.

It may be without logical explanation, but current themes are leaped at and quiescent yesterday as remote as the Flood. The sons of those who delighted in "Wars with the Indians," preferred the like to the novels their mothers esteemed—the Cherubinas, Nymphs of the Valley, or Gentle Zitellas. Amid the smoking batteries and cannon-ball-cut pines, "the played-out idees of furren countries" were replaced by the moving pictures of the first of the War Stories. It was those whose pages were blotted by

homesick tears and dried by fervent sighs. Farewell to old days and ways—done like the cocked hats and buckled shoes. Astonishing how the New England boy so soon caught the spark from the Camp-fire of the Republic in convulsions; he was so communicative on a level that one in reading felt that strange conviction before a great actor that he is playing directly for you.

In the previous stories, he discoursed to country folk, who never know what beauties are about them. Here he actually opened the eyes to the expedients and reliances needed under fire. These Trowbridge books, therefore, taught the honored relics of "our Little Brotherly Difficulty," comforted them and spurred them, as far as their influence could go,

into making our second grand historical epoch. Hurriedly read by the screened bivouac fire, and thrust into the coat bosom at the alarm gun, they served to glance off the Minié bullet as well and more decorously than the traditional card-pack; and—interesting token of how good literature is distributed—copies were exchanged for tobacco with the pickets of "the Other Side." His constancy to the cardinal points of honor and manhood, cause these works to be another "Waverley," by which the Northerner was agreeably constrained to clasp hands with the Southron. His vein, in the colliding parties and opinions run clear, pure and untarnished like the thread of gold in a rich fabric; when it falls apart in time, the imperishable connection is good and

new and still invaluable: it serves forever. Posterity and the newly landed emigrant will comprehend much that is enigmatical to them by these adventure pictures, veracious and preternaturally sympathetic with all that won the tribute due valor, patience, manhood and soldierly esteem. Who has not fled from ennui in "Cudjo's Cave;" followed the "Three Scouts" in Indian file amid the gunfire of an enemy that were out "cooning;" or cut off "Coupon Bonds," when a red cent was scarce as Red Indians? With the pen he has left his mark on the hecatomb, and heroism is elevated into sight by his tribute as the granite base upholds the fine marble. Without fulsomely flattering or recklessly blam-

ing our brother, bravely misled, the fair play authorizes his national chronicle to be read, by the Suwanee as by the Merrimac.

THE VAGABONDS.

THE VAGABONDS.

WE are two travellers, Roger and I.
Roger 's my dog. — Come here, you scamp!
Jump for the gentlemen,—mind your eye!
Over the table,—look out for the lamp!—

The rogue is growing a little old;
Five years we 've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept out-doors when nights were cold,
And ate and drank—and starved—together.

We 've learned what comfort is, I tell you!
A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow!
The paw he holds up there 's been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle
(This out-door business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank ye, Sir,—I never drink;
Roger and I are exceedingly moral,—
Are n't we, Roger?—See him wink!—
Well, something hot, then,—we won't quarrel.
He 's thirsty, too,—see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk?
He understands every word that 's said,—
And he knows good milk from water-and-chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,
I 've been so sadly given to grog,
I wonder I 've not lost the respect
(Here 's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.
But he sticks by, through thick and thin;
And this old coat, with its empty pockets,

And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He 'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There is n't another creature living
Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,

To such a miserable thankless master!
No, Sir!—see him wag his tail and grin!
By George! it makes my old eyes water!
That is, there's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow. But no matter!

We 'll have some music, if you 're willing,
And Roger here (what a plague a cough is, Sir,)
Shall march a little——Start, you villain!
Paws up! Eyes front! Salute your officer!
'Bout face! Attention! Take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see!) Now hold your
Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle,
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the rebel
shakes,
When he stands up to hear his sentence.
Now tell us how many drams it takes
To honor a jolly new acquaintance.
Five yelps,—that 's five; he 's mighty
knowing!
The night's before us, fill the glasses!—
Quick, Sir! I'm ill,—my brain is
going!—
Some brandy,—thank you,—there!—
it passes!

Why not reform? That 's easily said;
But I 've gone through such wretched
treatment,
Sometimes forgetting the taste of bread,
And scarce remembering what meat
meant,

That my poor stomach 's past reform ;
And there are times when, mad with thinking,
I 'd sell out heaven for something warm
To prop a horrible inward sinking.

Is there a way to forget to think ?
At your age, Sir, home, fortune, friends,
A dear girl's love,—but I took to drink ;—
The same old story ; you know how it ends.
If you could have seen these classic features,—
You need n't laugh, Sir ; they were not then
Such a burning libel on God's creatures :
I was one of your handsome men !

If you had seen HER, so fair and young,
Whose head was happy on this breast !

If you could have heard the songs I sung
When the wine went round, you would n't have guessed
That ever I, Sir, should be straying
From door to door, with fiddle and dog,
Ragged and penniless, and playing
For you to-night for a glass of grog!

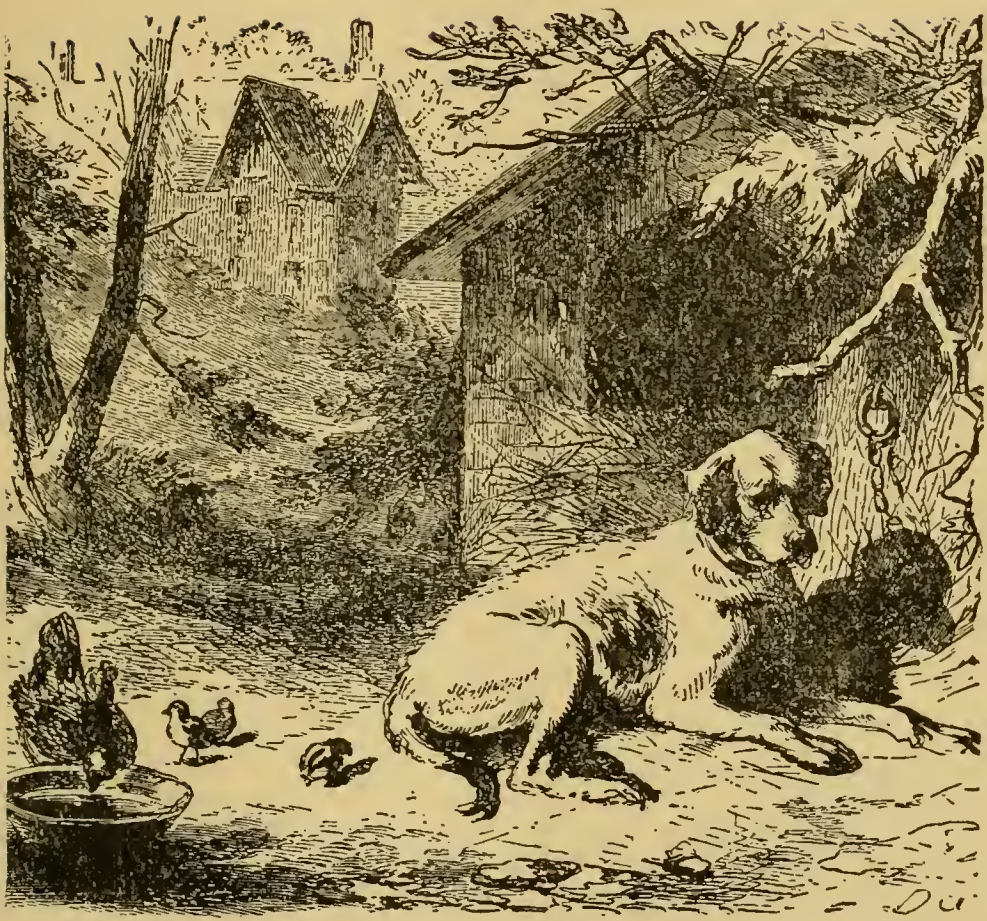
She 's married since,—a parson's wife:
'T was better for her that we should part,—
Better the soberest, prosiest life
Than a blasted home and a broken heart.
I have seen her? Once: I was weak and spent
On the dusty road: a carriage stopped:
But little she dreamed, as on she went,
Who kissed the coin that her fingers dropped!

You 've set me talking, Sir ; I'm sorry ;
It makes me wild to think of the change!
What do you care for a beggar's story?
Is it amusing? you find it strange?
I had a mother so proud of me!
'T was well she died before —— Do you know
If the happy spirits in heaven can see
The ruin and wretchedness here below?

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
This pain ; then Roger and I will start.
I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden,
Aching thing, in place of a heart?
He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,

No doubt, remembering things that were,—
A virtuous kennel, with plenty of food,
And himself a sober, respectable cur.

I 'm better now; that glass was warming.—
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street.
Not a very gay life to lead, you think?
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink;—
The sooner, the better for Roger and me!



MISCELLANEOUS.

BY THE RIVER.

I.

In the beautiful greenwood's charmèd
light,
And down through the meadows wide and
bright,
Deep in the silence, and smooth in the
gleam,
For ever and ever flows the stream.

Where the mandrakes grow, and the pale,
thin grass
The airy scarf of the woodland weaves,
By dim, enchanted paths I pass,
Crushing the twigs and the last year's
leaves.

Over the wave, by the crystal brink,
A kingfisher sits on a low, dead limb:
He is always sitting there, I think,—
And another, within the crystal brink,
Is always looking up at him.

I know where an old tree leans across
From bank to bank, an ancient tree,
Quaintly cushioned with curious moss,
A bridge for the cool wood-nymphs and me:
Half seen they flit, while here I sit
By the magical water, watching it.

In its bosom swims the fair phantasm
Of a subterraneous azure chasm,
So soft and clear, you would say the stream
Was dreaming of heaven a visible dream.

Where the noontide basks, and its warm
rays tint
The nettles and clover and scented mint,
And the crinkled airs, that curl and
quiver,
Drop their wreaths in the mirroring
river,—
Under the shaggy magnificent drapery
Of many a wild-woven native grapery,—
By ivy-bowers, and banks of violets,
And golden hillocks, and emerald islets,
Along its sinuous shining bed,
In sheets of splendor it lies outspread.

In the twilight stillness and solitude
Of green caves roofed by the brooding
wood,

Where the woodbine swings, and beneath
the trailing
Sprays of the queenly elm-tree sailing,—
By ribbed and wave-worn ledges shim-
mering,
Gilding the rocks with a rippled glim-
mering,
All pictured over in shade and sun,
The wavering silken waters run.

Upon this mossy trunk I sit,
Over the river, watching it,
A shadowed face peers up at me;
And another tree in the chasm I see,
Clinging above the abyss it spans;
The broad boughs curve their spreading
fans,

From side to side, in the nether air;
And phantom birds in the phantom branches
Mimic the birds above; and there,
Oh! far below, solemn and slow,
The white clouds roll the crumbling snow
Of ever-pendulous avalanches,
Till the brain grows giddy, gazing through
Their wild, wide rifts of bottomless blue.

II.

THROUGH the river, and through the rifts
Of the sundered earth I gaze,
While Thought on dreamy pinion drifts,
Over cerulean bays,
Into the deep ethereal sea
Of her own serene eternity.

Transfigured by my trancèd eye,
Wood and meadow, and stream and sky,
Like vistas of a vision lie:
THE WORLD is the River that flickers by.

Its skies are the blue-arched centuries;
And its forms are the transient images
Flung on the flowing film of Time
By the steadfast shores of a fadeless clime.

As yonder wave-side willows grow,
Substance above, and shadow below,
The golden slopes of that upper sphere
Hang their imperfect landscapes here.

Fast by the Tree of Life, which shoots
Duplicate forms from self-same roots,
Under the fringes of Paradise,
The crystal brim of the River lies.

There are banks of Peace, whose lilies pure
Paint on the wave their portraiture;
And many a holy influence,
That climbs to God like the breath of prayer,
Creeps quivering into the glass of sense,
To bless the immortals mirrored there.

Through realms of Poesy, whose white cliffs
Cloud its deeps with their hieroglyphs,
Alpine fantasies heaped and wrought
At will by the frolicsome winds of Thought,—
By shores of Beauty, whose colors pass
Faintly into the misty glass,—

By hills of Truth, whose glories show
Distorted, broken, and dimmed, as we
know,—
Kissed by the tremulous long green tress
Of the glistening tree of Happiness,
Which ever our aching grasp eludes
With sweet illusive similitudes,—
All pictured over in shade and gleam,
For ever and ever runs the Stream.

The orb that burns in the rifts of space
Is the adumbration of God's Face,
My Soul leans over the murmuring flow,
And I am the image it sees below.

THE PEWEE.

The listening Dryads hushed the woods;
The boughs were thick, and thin and few
The golden ribbons fluttering through;
Their sun-embroidered, leafy hoods
The lindens lifted to the blue:
Only a little forest-brook
The farthest hem of silence shook:
When in the hollow shades I heard—
Was it a spirit or a bird?
Or, strayed from Eden, desolate,
Some Peri calling to her mate,

Whom nevermore her mate would cheer?
"Pe-ri! Pe-ri! Peer!"

Through rocky clefts the brooklet fell
With plashy pour, that scarce was sound,
But only quiet less profound,
A stillness fresh and audible:
A yellow leaflet to the ground
Whirled noiselessly: with wing of gloss
A hovering sunbeam brushed the moss,
And, wavering brightly over it,
Sat like a butterfly alit:
The owlet in his open door
Stared roundly: while the breezes bore
The plaint to far-off places drear,—
"Pe-ree! pe-ree! peer!"

To trace it in its green retreat
I sought among the boughs in vain;
And followed still the wandering strain,
So melancholy and so sweet
The dim-eyed violets yearned with pain.
'T was now a sorrow in the air,
Some nymph's immortalized despair
Haunting the woods and waterfalls;
And now, at long, sad intervals,
Sitting unseen in dusky shade,
His plaintive pipe some fairy played,
With long-drawn cadence thin and clear,—
"Pe-wee! pe-wee! peer!"

Long-drawn and clear its closes were,—
As if the hand of Music through

The sombre robe of Silence drew
A thread of golden gossamer:
So sweet a flute the fairy blew.
Like beggared princes of the wood,
In silver rags the birches stood;
The hemlocks, lordly counsellors,
Were dumb; the sturdy servitors,
In beechen jackets patched and gray,
Seemed waiting spellbound all the day
That low entrancing note to hear,—
"Pe-wee! pe-wee! peer!"

I quit the search, and sat me down
Beside the brook, irresolute,
And watched a little bird in suit
Of sober olive, soft and brown,
Perched in the maple-branches, mute:

With greenish gold its vest was fringed,
Its tiny cap was ebon-tinged,
With ivory pale its wings were barred,
And its dark eyes were tender-starred.
"Dear bird," I said, "what is thy name?"
And thrice the mournful answer came,
So faint and far, and yet so near,—
"Pe-wee! Pe-wee! Peer!"

For so I found my forest-bird,—
The pewee of the loneliest woods,
Sole singer in these solitudes,
Which never robin's whistle stirred,
Where never bluebird's plume intrudes.
Quick darting through the dewy morn,
The redstart trills his twittering horn,

And vanisheth : sometimes at even,
Like liquid pearls fresh showered from heaven,
The high notes of the lone wood-thrush
Fall on the forest's holy hush :
But thou all day complainest here,—
"Pe-wee ! pe-wee ! peer ! "

Hast thou too, in thy little breast,
Strange longings for a happier lot,—
For love, for life, thou know'st not what,—
A yearning, and a vague unrest,
For something still which thou hast not ?—
Thou soul of some benighted child
That perished, crying in the wild !

Or lost, forlorn, and wandering maid,
By love allured, by love betrayed,
Whose spirit with her latest sigh
Arose, a little wingèd cry,
Above her chill and mossy bier!
"Dear me! dear me! dear!"

Ah, no such piercing sorrow mars
The pewee's life of cheerful ease!
He sings, or leaves his song to seize
An insect sporting in the bars
Of mild bright light that gild the trees.
A very poet he! For him
All pleasant places still and dim:
His heart, a spark of heavenly fire,
Burns with undying, sweet desire:

And so he sings; and so his song,
Though heard not by the hurrying throng,
Is solace to the pensive ear:
"Pewee! pewee! peer!"

MY BROTHER AND I.

From the door where I stand I can see his fair land
Sloping up to a broad sunny height,
The meadows new-shorn, and the green wavy corn,
The buckwheat all blossoming white:
There a gay garden blooms, there are cedars like plumes,
And a rill from the mountain leaps up in a fountain,
And shakes its glad locks in the light.

He dwells in the hall where the long shadows fall
On the checkered and cool esplanade;
I live in a cottage secluded and small,
By a gnarly old apple-tree's shade:
Side by side in the glen, I and my brother Ben,—
Just the river between us, with borders as green as
The banks where in childhood we played.

But now nevermore upon river or shore
He runs or he rows by my side;
For I am still poor, like our father before,
And he, full of riches and pride,

Leads a life of such show, there is no
room, you know,
In the very fine carriage he gained by his
marriage
For an old-fashioned brother to ride.

His wife, with her gold, gives him friends,
I am told,
With whom she is rather too gay,—
The senator's son, who is ready to run
For her gloves and her fan, night or
day,
And to gallop beside, when she wishes to
ride:
Oh, no doubt 't is an honor to see smile
upon her
Such world-famous fellows as they!

Ah, brother of mine, while you sport, while you dine,
While you drink of your wine like a lord,
You might curse, one would say, and grow jaundiced and gray,
With such guests every day at your board!
But you sleek down your rage like a pard in its cage,
And blink in meek fashion through the bars of your passion,
As husbands like you can afford.

For still you must think, as you eat, as you drink,
As you hunt with your dogs and your guns,

How your pleasures are bought with the
wealth that she brought,
And you were once hunted by duns.
Oh, I envy you not your more fortunate
lot:
I've a wife all my own in my own little
cot,
And with happiness, which is the only
true riches,
The cup of our love overruns.

We have bright, rosy girls, fair as ever
an earl's,
And the wealth of their curls is our
gold;
Oh, their lisp and their laugh, they are
sweeter by half

Than the wine that you quaff red and old!
We have love-lighted looks, we have work, we have books,
Our boys have grown manly and bold,
And they never shall blush, when their proud cousins brush
From the walls of their college such cob-webs of knowledge
As careless young fingers may hold.

Keep your pride and your cheer, for we need them not here,
And for me far too dear they would prove;
For gold is but gloss, and possessions are dross,
And gain is all loss, without love.

Yon severing tide is not fordless or wide,—
The soul's blue abysses our homesteads divide:
Down through the still river they deepen forever,
Like the skies it reflects from above.

Still my brother thou art, though our lives lie apart,
Path from path, heart from heart, more and more.
Oh, I have not forgot,—oh, remember you not
Our room in the cot by the shore?
And a night soon will come, when the murmur and hum
Of our days shall be dumb evermore,

And again we shall lie side by side, you and I,
Beneath the green cover you helped to lay over
Our honest old father of yore.

THE LAST RALLY.

NOVEMBER, 1864.

RALLY! rally! rally!
Arouse the slumbering land!
Rally! rally! from mountain and valley,
And up from the ocean-strand!
Ye sons of the West, America's best!
New Hampshire's men of might!
From prairie and crag unfurl the flag,
And rally to the fight!

Armies of untried heroes,
Disguised in craftsman and clerk!
Ye men of the coast, invincible host!
Come, every one, to the work,—

From the fisherman gray as the salt sea spray
That on Long Island breaks,
To the youth who tills the uttermost hills
By the blue northwestern lakes!

And ye Freedmen! rally, rally,
To the banners of the North!
Through the shattered door of bondage pour
Your swarthy legions forth!
Kentuckians! ye of Tennessee
Who scorned the despot's sway!
To all, to all, the bugle-call
Of freedom sounds to-day!

Old men shall fight with the ballot,
Weapon the last and best,—
And the bayonet, with blood red-wet,
Shall write the will of the rest;
And the boys shall fill men's places,
And the little maiden rock
Her doll as she sits with her grandam and knits
An unknown hero's sock.

And the hearts of heroic mothers,
And the deeds of noble wives,
With their power to bless shall aid no less
Than the brave who give their lives.

The rich their gold shall bring, and the old
Shall help us with their prayers;
While hovering hosts of pallid ghosts
Attend us unawares.

From the ghastly fields of Shiloh
Muster the phantom bands,
From Virginia's swamps, and Death's white camps
On Carolina sands;
From Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg,
I see them gathering fast;
And up from Manassas, what is it that passes
Like thin clouds in the blast?

From the Wilderness, where blanches
The nameless skeleton;
From Vicksburg's slaughter and red-streaked water,
And the trenches of Donelson;
From the cruel, cruel prisons,
Where their bodies pined away,
From groaning decks, from sunken wrecks,
They gather with us to-day.

And they say to us, "Rally! rally!
The work is almost done!
Ye harvesters, sally from mountain and valley
And reap the fields we won!

We sowed for endless years of peace,
We harrowed and watered well;
Our dying deeds were the scattered seeds:
Shall they perish where they fell?"

And their brothers, left behind them
In the deadly roar and clash
Of cannon and sword, by fort and ford,
And the carbine's quivering flash,—
Before the Rebel citadel
Just trembling to its fall,
From Georgia's glens, from Florida's fens,
For us they call, they call!

The life-blood of the tyrant
Is ebbing fast away;
Victory waits at her opening gates,
And smiles on our array;
With solemn eyes the Centuries
Before us watching stand,
And Love lets down his starry crown
To bless the future land.

One more sublime endeavor,
And behold the dawn of Peace!
One more endeavor, and war forever
Throughout the land shall cease!
For ever and ever the vanquished power
Of Slavery shall be slain,
And Freedom's stained and trampled flower
Shall blossom white again!

Then rally! rally! rally!
Make tumult in the land!
Ye foresters, rally from mountain and valley!
Ye fishermen, from the strand!
Brave sons of the West, America's best!
New England's men of might!
From prairie and crag unfurl the flag,
And rally to the fight!

THE MASKERS.

YESTERNIGHT, as late as I strayed
Through the orchard's mottled shade,—
Coming to the moonlit alleys,
Where the sweet Southwind, that dallies
All day with the Queen of Roses,
All night on her breast reposes,—
Drinking from the dewy blooms,
Silences, and scented glooms
Of the warm-breathed summer night,
Long, deep draughts of pure delight,—
Quick the shaken foliage parted,
And from out its shadows darted

Dwarf-like forms, with hideous faces,
Cries, contortions, and grimaces.
Still I stood beneath the lonely,
Sighing lilacs, saying only,—
"Little friends, you can't alarm me;
Well I know you would not harm me!"
Straightway dropped each painted mask,
Sword of lath, and paper casque,
And a troop of rosy girls
Ran and kissed me through their curls.

Caught within their net of graces,
I looked round on shining faces.
Sweetly through the moonlit alleys
Rang their laughter's silver sallies.
Then along the pathway, light
With the white bloom of the night,

I went peaceful, pacing slow,
Captive held in arms of snow.
Happy maids! of you I learn
Heavenly maskers to discern!
So, when seeming griefs and harms
Fill life's garden with alarms,
Through its inner walks enchanted
I will ever move undaunted.
Love hath messengers that borrow
Tragic masks of fear and sorrow,
When they come to do us kindness,—
And but for our tears and blindness,
We should see, through each disguise,
Cherub cheeks and angel eyes.

SERVICE.

When I beheld a lover woo
A maid unwilling,
And saw what lavish deeds men do,
Hope's flagon filling,—
What vines are tilled, what wines are spilled,
And madly wasted,
To fill the flask that's never filled,
And rarely tasted:

Devouring all life's heritage,
And inly starving;
Dulling the spirit's mystic edge,
The banquet carving;

Feasting with Pride, that Barmecide
Of unreal dishes;
And wandering ever in a wide,
Wide world of wishes:

For gain or glory lands and seas
Endlessly ranging,
Safety and years and health and ease
Freely exchanging;
Chiselling Humanity to dust
Of glittering riches,
God's blood-veined marble to a bust
For Fame's cold niches:

Desire's loose reins, and steed that stains
The rider's raiment;
Sorrow and sacrifice and pains
For worthless payment:—

When, ever as I moved, I saw
The world's contagion,
Then turned, O Love! to thy sweet law
And compensation,—

Well might red shame my cheek consume!
O service slighted!
O Bride of Paradise, to whom
I long was plighted!
Do I with burning lips profess
To serve thee wholly,
Yet labor less for blessedness
Than fools for folly?

The wary worldling spread his toils
Whilst I was sleeping;
The wakeful miser locked his spoils,
Keen vigils keeping:

I loosed the latches of my soul
To pleading Pleasure,
Who stayed one little hour, and stole
My heavenly treasure.

A friend for friend's sake will endure
Sharp provocations;
And knaves are cunning to secure,
By cringing patience,
And smiles upon a smarting cheek,
Some dear advantage,—
Swathing their grievances in meek
Submission's bandage.

Yet for thy sake I will not take
One drop of trial,
But raise rebellious hands to break
The bitter vial.

At hardship's surly-visaged churl
My spirit sallies;
And melts, O Peace! thy priceless pearl
In passion's chalice.

Yet never quite, in darkest night,
Was I forsaken:
Down trickles still some starry rill
My heart to waken.
O Love Divine! could I resign
This changeful spirit
To walk thy ways, what wealth of grace
Might I inherit!

If one poor flower of thanks to thee
Be truly given,
All night thou snowest down to me
Lilies of heaven!

One task of human love fulfilled,
  Thy glimpses tender
My days of lonely labor gild
  With gleams of splendor!

One prayer,—"Thy will, not mine!"—
    and bright,
  O'er all my being,
Breaks blissful light, that gives to sight
  A subtler seeing;
Straightway mine ear is tuned to hear
  Ethereal numbers,
Whose secret symphonies insphere
  The dull earth's slumbers.

"Thy will!"—and I am armed to meet
  Misfortune's volleys;
For every sorrow I have sweet,
  Oh, sweetest solace!

"Thy will!"—no more I hunger sore,
For angels feed me;
Henceforth for days, by peaceful ways,
They gently lead me.

For me the diamond dawns are set
In rings of beauty,
And all my paths are dewy wet
With pleasant duty;
Beneath the boughs of calm content
My hammock swinging,
In this green tent my eyes are spent,
Feasting and singing.

THE FROZEN HARBOR.

When Winter encamps on our borders,
And dips his white beard in the rills,
And lays his shield over highway and field,
And pitches his tents on the hills,—
In the wan light I wake, and see on the lake,
Like a glove by the night-winds blown,
With fingers that crook up creek and brook,
His shining gauntlet thrown.

Then over the lonely harbor,
In the quiet and deadly cold
Of a single night, when only the bright,
Cold constellations behold,
Without trestle or beam, without mortise or seam,
It swiftly and silently spread
A bridge as of steel, which a Titan's heel
In the early light might tread.

Where Morning over the waters
Her web of splendor spun,
Till the wave, all a-twinkle with ripple and wrinkle,
Hung shimmering in the sun,—

Where the liquid lip at the breast of the ship
Whispered and laughed and kissed,
And the long, dark streamer of smoke from the steamer
Trailed off in the rose-tinted mist,—

Now all is gray desolation,
As up from the hoary coast,
Over snow-fields and islands her white arms in silence
Outspreading like a ghost,
Her feet in shroud, her forehead in cloud,
Pale walks the sheeted Dawn:
The sea's blue rim lies shorn and dim,
In the purple East withdrawn.

Where floated the fleets of commerce,
With proud breasts cleaving the tide,—
Like emmet or bug with its burden, the tug
Hither and thither plied,—
Where the quick paddles flashed, where the dropped anchor plashed,
And rattled the running chain,
Where the merchantman swung in the current, where sung
The sailors their far refrain,—

Behold! when ruddy Aurora
Peeps from her opening door,
Faint gleams of the sun like fairies run
And sport on a crystal floor;

Upon the river's bright panoply quivers
The noon's resplendent lance;
And by night through the narrows the moon's slanted arrows
Icily sparkle and glance.

Flown are the flocks of commerce,
Like wild swans hurrying south;
The lighter, belated, is frozen, full-freighted,
Within the harbor's mouth;
The brigantine, homeward bringing
Sweet spices from afar,
All night must wait with her fragrant freight
Below the lighthouse star.

The ships at their anchors are frozen,
From rudder to sloping chain:
Rock-like they rise: the low sloop lies
An oasis in the plain.
Like reeds here and there, and tall masts bare
Upspring: as on the edge
Of a lawn smooth-shaven, around the haven
The shipping grows like sedge.

Here, weaving the union of cities,
With hoar wakes belting the blue,
From slip to slip, past schooner and ship,
The ferry's shuttles flew:—

Now, loosed from its stall, on the yielding wall
The steamboat paws and rears;
The citizens pass on a pavement of glass,
And climb the frosted piers.

Where, in the November twilight,
To the ribs of the skeleton bark
That stranded lay in the bend of the bay,
Motionless, low, and dark,
Came ever three shags, like three lone hags,
And sat o'er the troubled water,
Each nursing apart her shrivelled heart,
With her mantle wrapped about her,—

Now over the ancient timbers
Is built a magic deck;
Children run out with laughter and shout
And dance around the wreck;
The fisherman near his long eel-spear
Thrusts in through the ice, or stands
With fingers on lips, and now and then whips
His sides with mittened hands.

Alone and pensive I wander
Far out from the city-wharf
To the buoy below in its cap of snow,
Low stooping like a dwarf;
In the fading ray of the dull, brief day
I wander and muse apart,—
For this frozen sea is a symbol to me
Of many a human heart.

I think of the hopes deep sunken
Like anchors under the ice,—
Of souls that wait for Love's sweet freight
And the spices of Paradise:
Far off their barks are tossing
On the billows of unrest,
And enter not in, for the hardness and sin
That close the secret breast.

I linger, until, at evening,
The town-roofs, towering high,
Uprear in the dimness their tall, dark chimneys,
Indenting the sunset sky,
And the pendent spear on the edge of the pier

Signals my homeward way,
As it gleams through the dusk like a walrus's tusk
On the floes of a polar bay.

Then I think of the desolate households
On which the day shuts down,—
What misery hides in the darkened tides
Of life in yonder town!
I think of the lonely poet
In his hours of coldness and pain,
His fancies full-freighted, like lighters belated,
All frozen within his brain.

And I hearken to the moanings
That come from the burdened bay:
As a camel, that kneels for his lading, reels,
And cannot bear it away,
The mighty load is slowly
Upheaved with struggle and pain
From centre to side, then the groaning tide
Sinks heavily down again.

So day and night you may hear it
Panting beneath its pack,
Till sailor and saw, till south wind and thaw,
Unbind it from its back.

O Sun! will thy beam ever gladden the stream
And bid its burden depart?
O Life! all in vain do we strive with the chain
That fetters and chills the heart?

Already in vision prophetic
On yonder height I stand:
The gulls are gay upon the bay,
The swallows on the land;—
'Tis spring-time now; like an aspen-bough
Shaken across the sky,
In the silvery light with twinkling flight
The rustling plovers fly.

Aloft in the sunlit cordage
Behold the climbing tar,
With his shadow beside on the sail white and wide,
Climbing a shadow-spar!
Up the glassy stream with issuing steam
The cutter crawls again,
All winged with cloud and buzzing loud,
Like a bee upon the pane.

The brigantine is bringing
Her cargo to the quay,
The sloop flits by like a butterfly,
The schooner skims the sea.

O young heart's trust, beneath the crust
Of a chilling world congealed!
O love, whose flow the winter of woe
With its icy hand hath sealed!

Learn patience from the lesson!
Though the night be drear and long,
To the darkest sorrow there comes a morrow,
A right to every wrong.
And as, when, having run his low course, the red Sun
Comes charging gayly up here,
The white shield of Winter shall shiver and splinter
At the touch of his golden spear,—

Then rushing under the bridges,
And crushing among the piles,
In gray mottled masses the drift-ice passes,
Like seaward floating isles ;—
So Life shall return from its solstice, and burn
In trappings of gold and blue,
The world shall pass like a shattered glass,
And the heaven of Love shine through.

THE JAGUAR HUNT.

THE dark jaguar was abroad in the land;
His strength and his fierceness what foe could withstand?
The breath of his anger was hot on the air,
And the white lamb of Peace he had dragged to his lair.

Then up rose the Farmer; he summoned his sons:
"Now saddle your horses, now look to your guns!"

And he called to his hound, as he sprang
from the ground
To the back of his black pawing steed
with a bound.

Oh, their hearts, at the word, how they
tingled and stirred!
They followed, all belted and booted and
spurred.
"Buckle tight, boys!" said he, "for who
gallops with me,
Such a hunt as was never before he shall
see!

"This traitor, we know him! for when he
was younger,
We flattered him, patted him, fed his
fierce hunger:

But now far too long we have borne with the wrong,
For each morsel we tossed makes him savage and strong."

Then said one, "He must die!" And they took up the cry,
"For this last crime of his he must die! he must die!"
But the slow eldest-born sauntered sad and forlorn,
For his heart was at home on that fair hunting-morn.

"I remember," he said, "how this fine cub we track
Has carried me many a time on his back!"

And he called to his brothers, "Fight gently! be kind!"
And he kept the dread hound, Retribution, behind.

The dark jaguar on a bough in the brake
Crouched, silent and wily, and lithe as a snake:
They spied not their game, but, as onward they came,
Through the dense leafage gleamed two red eyeballs of flame.

Black-spotted, and mottled, and whiskered, and grim,
White-bellied, and yellow, he lay on the limb,

All so still that you saw but just one
tawny paw
Lightly reach through the leaves and as
softly withdraw.

Then shrilled his fierce cry, as the riders
drew nigh,
And he shot from the bough like a bolt
from the sky:
In the foremost he fastened his fangs as
he fell,
While all the black jungle reëchoed his
yell.

Oh, then there was carnage by field and
by flood!
The green sod was crimsoned, the rivers
ran blood,

The cornfields were trampled, and all in
their track
The beautiful valley lay blasted and
black.

Now the din of the conflict swells deadly
and loud,
And the dust of the tumult rolls up like
a cloud:
Then afar down the slope of the South-
land recedes
The wild rapid clatter of galloping steeds.

With wide nostrils smoking, and flanks
dripping gore,
The black stallion bore his bold rider
before,

As onward they thundered through forest and glen,
A-hunting the dark jaguar to his den.

In April, sweet April, the chase was begun;
It was April again, when the hunting was done:
The snows of four winters and four summers gree:
Lay red-streaked and trodden and blighted between.

Then the monster stretched all his grim length on the ground;
His life-blood was wasting from many a wound;

Ferocious and gory and snarling he lay,
Amid heaps of the whitening bones of his prey.

Then up spoke the slow eldest son, and he said,
"All he needs now is just to be fostered and fed!
Give over the strife! Brothers, put up the knife!
We will tame him, reclaim him, but take not his life!"

But the Farmer flung back the false words in his face:
"He is none of my race, who gives counsel so base!

Now let loose the hound!" And the
hound was unbound,
And like lightning the heart of the
traitor he found.

"So rapine and treason forever shall
cease!"
And they wash the stained fleece of the
pale lamb of Peace;
When, lo! a strong angel stands wingèd
and white
In a wonderful raiment of ravishing light!

Peace is raised from the dead! In the
radiance shed
By the halo of glory that shines round
her head,

Fair gardens shall bloom where the black
jungle grew,
And all the glad valley shall blossom
anew!

BEYOND.

From her own far dominions,
Long since, with shorn pinions,
My spirit was banished:
But above her still hover, in vigils and dreams,
Ethereal visitants, voices, and gleams,
That forever remind her
Of something behind her
Long vanished.

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Through the listening night,
With mysterious flight,

Pass those winged intimations:
Like stars shot from heaven, their still voices fall to me;
Far and departing, they signal and call to me,
Strangely beseeching me,
Chiding, yet teaching me
Patience.

Then at times, oh! at times,
To their luminous climes
I pursue as a swallow!
To the river of Peace, and its solacing shades,
To the haunts of my lost ones, in heavenly glades,

With strong aspirations
Their pinions' vibrations
I follow.

O heart, be thou patient!
Though here I am stationed
A season in durance,
The chain of the world I will cheerfully wear;
For, spanning my soul like a rainbow, I bear,
With the yoke of my lowly
Condition, a holy
Assurance,—

That never in vain
Does the spirit maintain

Her eternal allegiance:
Through suffering and yearning, like Infancy learning
Its lesson, we linger; then skyward returning,
On plumes fully grown
We depart to our own
Native regions!

THE CUP.

THE cup I sing is a cup of gold,
Many and many a century old,
Sculptured fair, and over-filled
With wine of a generous vintage, spilled
In crystal currents and foaming tides
All round its luminous, pictured sides.

Old Time enamelled and embossed
This ancient cup at an infinite cost.
Its frame he wrought of metal that run
Red from the furnace of the sun.
Ages on ages slowly rolled
Before the glowing mass was cold,

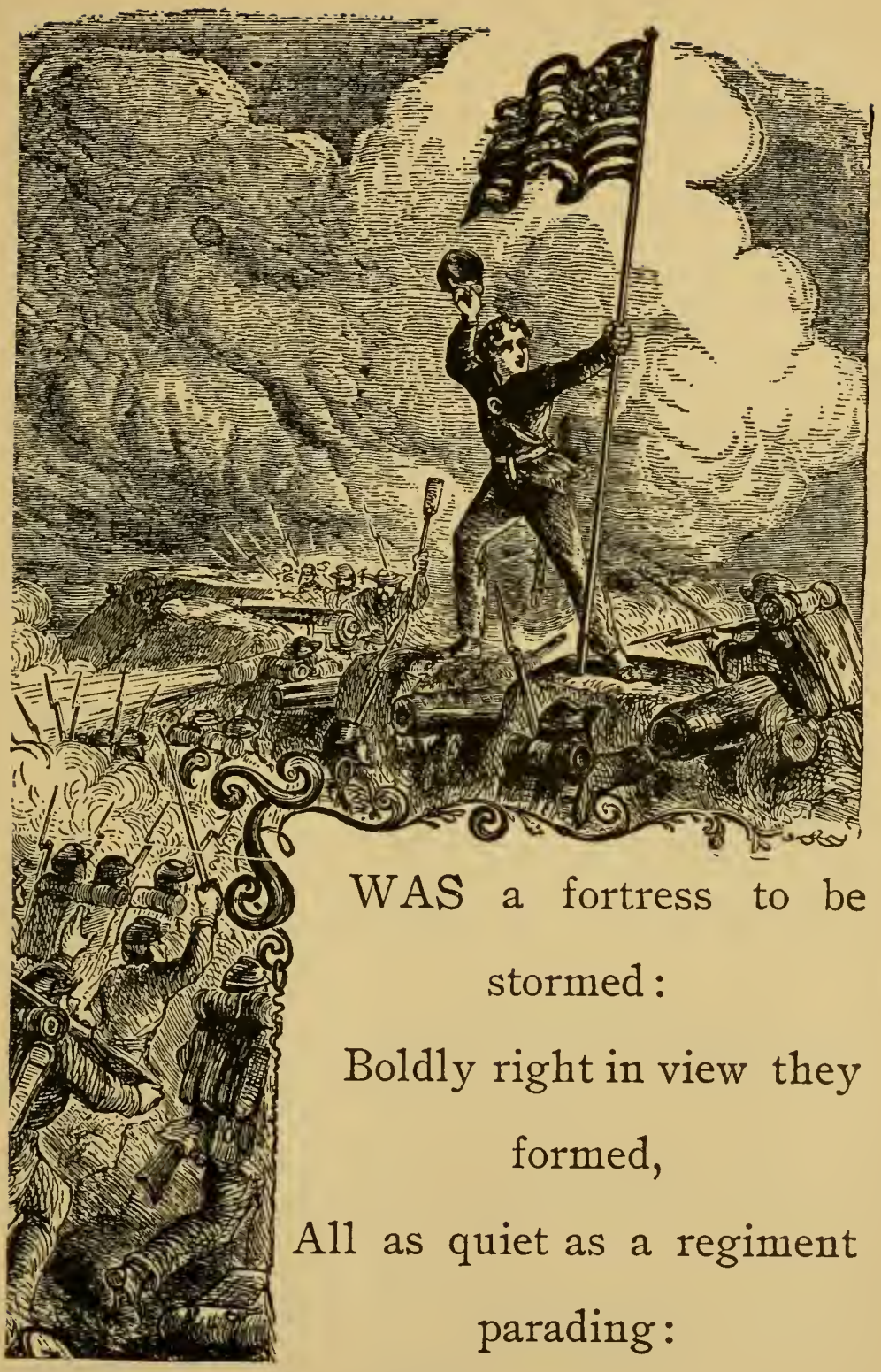
And still he toiled at the antique mould,—
Turning it fast in his fashioning hand,
Tracing circle, layer, and band,
Carving figures quaint and strange,
Pursuing, through many a wondrous change,
The symmetry of a plan divine.
At last he poured the lustrous wine,
Crowned high the radiant wave with light,
And held aloft the goblet bright,
Half in shadow, and wreathed in mist
Of purple, amber, and amethyst.

This is the goblet from whose brink
All creatures that have life must drink:
Foemen and lovers, haughty lord
And sallow beggar with lips abhorred.

The new-born infant, ere it gain
The mother's breast, this wine must drain.
The oak with its subtile juice is fed,
The rose drinks till her cheeks are red,
And the dimpled, dainty violet sips
The limpid stream with loving lips.
It holds the blood of sun and star,
And all pure essences that are:
No fruit so high on the heavenly vine,
Whose golden hanging clusters shine
On the far-off shadowy midnight hills,
But some sweet influence it distils
That slideth down the silvery rills.
Here Wisdom drowned her dangerous thought,
The early gods their secrets brought;

Beauty, in quivering lines of light,
Ripples before the ravished sight;
And the unseen mystic spheres combine
To charm the cup and drug the wine.
All day I drink of the wine and deep
In its stainless waves my senses steep;
All night my peaceful soul lies drowned
In hollows of the cup profound;
Again each morn I clamber up
The emerald crater of the cup,
On massive knobs of jasper stand
And view the azure ring expand:
I watch the foam-wreaths toss and swim
In the wine that o'erruns the jewelled rim,
Edges of chrysolite emerge,
Dawn-tinted, from the misty surge;

My thrilled, uncovered front I lave,
My eager senses kiss the wave,
And drain, with its viewless draught, the
lore
That warmeth the bosom's secret core,
And the fire that maddens the poet's brain
With wild sweet ardor and heavenly pain.



WAS a fortress to be
stormed:
Boldly right in view they
formed,
All as quiet as a regiment
parading:

Then in front a line of flame!
Then at left and right the same!
Two platoons received a furious enfilading.
To their places still they filed,
And they smiled at the wild
Cannonading.

"'T will be over in an hour!
'T will not be much of a shower!
Never mind, my boys," said he, "a little drizzling!"
Then to cross that fatal plain,
Through the whirring, hurtling rain
Of the grape-shot, and the minie-bullets' whistling!

But he nothing heeds nor shuns,
As he runs with the guns
Brightly bristling!

Leaving trails of dead and dying
In their track, yet forward flying
Like a breaker where the gale of conflict rolled them,
With a foam of flashing light
Borne before them on their bright
Burnished barrels,—O, 'twas fearful to behold them!
While from ramparts roaring loud
Swept a cloud like a shroud
To enfold them!

O, his color was the first!
Through the burying cloud he burst,

With the standard to the battle forward
slanted!
Through the belching, blinding breath
Of the flaming jaws of Death,
Till his banner on the bastion he had
planted!
By the screaming shot that fell,
And the yell of the shell,
Nothing daunted.

Right against the bulwark dashing,
Over tangled branches crashing,
'Mid the plunging volleys thundering
ever louder!
There he clambers, there he stands,
With the ensign in his hands,—
O, was ever hero handsomer or prouder?

Streaked with battle-sweat and slime,
And sublime in the grime
Of the powder!

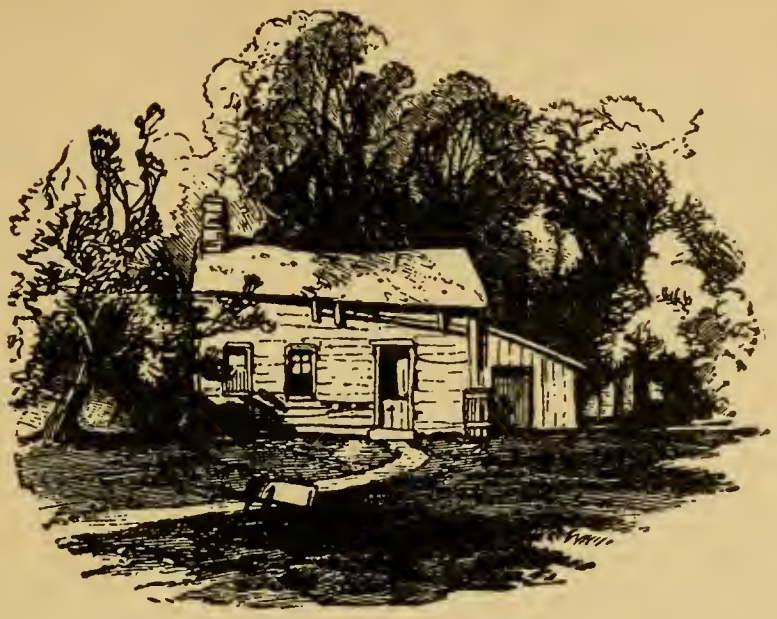
'Twas six minutes, at the least,
Ere the closing combat ceased,—
Near as we the mighty moments then could measure,—
And we held our souls with awe,
Till his haughty flag we saw
On the lifting vapors drifting o'er the embrasure!
Saw it glimmer in our tears,
While our ears heard the cheers
Rend the azure!

Through the abatis they broke,
Through the surging cannon-smoke,

And they drove the foe before like frightened cattle!
O, but never wound was his,
For in other wars than this,
Where the volleys of Life's conflict roar and rattle,
He must still, as he was wont,
In the front bear the brunt
Of the battle.

He shall guide the van of Truth!
And in manhood, as in youth,
Be her fearless, be her peerless Color-Bearer!
With his high and bright example,
Like a banner brave and ample,

Ever leading through receding clouds of
Error,
To the empire of the Strong,
And to Wrong he shall long
Be a terror!



THE WONDERFUL SACK.

THE apple-boughs half hid the house
Where lived the lonely widow;
Behind it stood the chestnut wood,
Before it spread the meadow.

She had no money in her till,
She was too poor to borrow;
With her lame leg she could not beg;
And no one cheered her sorrow.

She had no wood to cook her food,
And but one chair to sit in;
Last spring she lost a cow, that cost
A whole year's steady knitting.

She had worn her fingers to the bone,
Her back was growing double;
One day the pig tore up her wig,—
But that's not half her trouble.

Her best black gown was faded brown,
Her shoes were all in tatters,
With not a pair for Sunday wear:
Said she, "It little matters!

"Nobody asks me now to ride,
My garments are not fitting;

And with my crutch I care not much
To hobble off to meeting.

"I still preserve my Testament,
And though the *Acts* are missing,
And *Luke* is torn, and *Hebrews* worn,
On Sunday 't is a blessing.

"And other days I open it
Before me on the table,
And there I sit, and read, and knit,
As long as I am able."

One evening she had closed the book,
But still she sat there knitting;
"Meow-meow!" complained the old black cat;
"Mew-mew!" the spotted kitten.

And on the hearth, with sober mirth,
"Chirp, chirp!" replied the cricket.
'T was dark,—but hark!" "Bow-ow!"
the bark
Of Ranger at the wicket!

Is Ranger barking at the moon?
Or what can be the matter?
What trouble now? "Bow-ow! bow-
ow!"—
She hears the old gate clatter.

"It is the wind that bangs the gate,
And I must knit my stocking!"
But hush!—what's that? Rat-tat! rat-
tat!
Alas! there's some one knocking!

"Dear me! dear me! who can it be?
Where, where is my crutch-handle?"
She rubs a match with hasty scratch,
She cannot light the candle!

Rat-tat! scratch, scratch! the worthless match!
The cat growls in the corner.
Rat-tat! scratch, scratch! Up flies the latch,—
"Good evening, Mrs. Warner!"

The kitten spits and lifts her back,
Her eyes glare on the stranger;
The old cat's tail ruffs big and black,
Loud barks the old dog Ranger!

Blue burns at last the tardy match,
And dim the candle glimmers;
Along the floor beside the door
The cold white moonlight shimmers.

"Sit down!"—the widow gives her chair.
"Get out!" she says to Ranger.
"Alas! I do not know your name."
"No matter!" quoth the stranger.

His limbs are strong, his beard is long,
His hair is dark and wavy;
Upon his back he bears a sack;
His staff is stout and heavy.

"My way is lost, and with the frost
I feel my fingers tingle."

Then from his back he slips the sack,—
Ho! did you hear it jingle?

"Nay, keep your chair! while you sit there,
I'll take the other corner."
"I'm sorry, sir, I have no fire!"
"No matter, Mrs. Warner!"

He shakes his sack,—the magic sack!
Amazed the widow gazes!
Ho, ho! the chimney's full of wood!
Ha, ha! the wood it blazes!

Ho, ho! ha, ha! the merry fire!
It sputters and it crackles!
Snap, snap! flash, flash! old oak and ash
Send out a million sparkles.

The stranger sits upon his sack
Beside the chimney-corner,
And rubs his hands before the brands,
And smiles on Mrs. Warner.

She feels her heart beat fast with fear,
But what can be the danger?
"Can I do aught for you, kind sir?"
"I'm hungry!" quoth the stranger.

"Alas!" she said, "I have no food
For boiling or for baking!"
"I've food," quoth he, "for you and me!"
And gave his sack a shaking.

Out rattled knives, and forks, and spoons!
Twelve eggs, potatoes plenty!

One large soup dish, two plates of fish,
And bread enough for twenty!

And Rachel, calming her surprise,
As well as she was able,
Saw, following these, two roasted geese,
A tea-urn, and a table!

Strange, was it not? each dish was hot,
Not even a plate was broken;
The cloth was laid, and all arrayed,
Before a word was spoken!

"Sit up! sit up! and we will sup,
Dear madam, while we 're able!"
Said she. "The room is poor and small
For such a famous table!"

Again the stranger shakes the sack,
The walls begin to rumble!
Another shake! the rafters quake!
You'd think the roof would tumble!

Shake, shake! the room grows high and large,
The walls are painted over!
Shake, shake! out fall four chairs, in all,
A bureau, and a sofa!

The stranger stops to wipe the sweat
That down his face is streaming.
"Sit up! sit up! and we will sup,"
Quoth he, "while all is steaming!"

The widow hobbled on her crutch,
He kindly sprang to aid her.

"All this," said she, "is too much for me!"
Quoth he, "We'll have a waiter!"

Shake, shake, once more! and from the sack
Out popped a little fellow,
With elbows bare, bright eyes, sleek hair,
And trousers striped with yellow.

His legs were short, his body plump,
His cheek was like a cherry;
He turned three times; he gave a jump;
His laugh rang loud and merry!

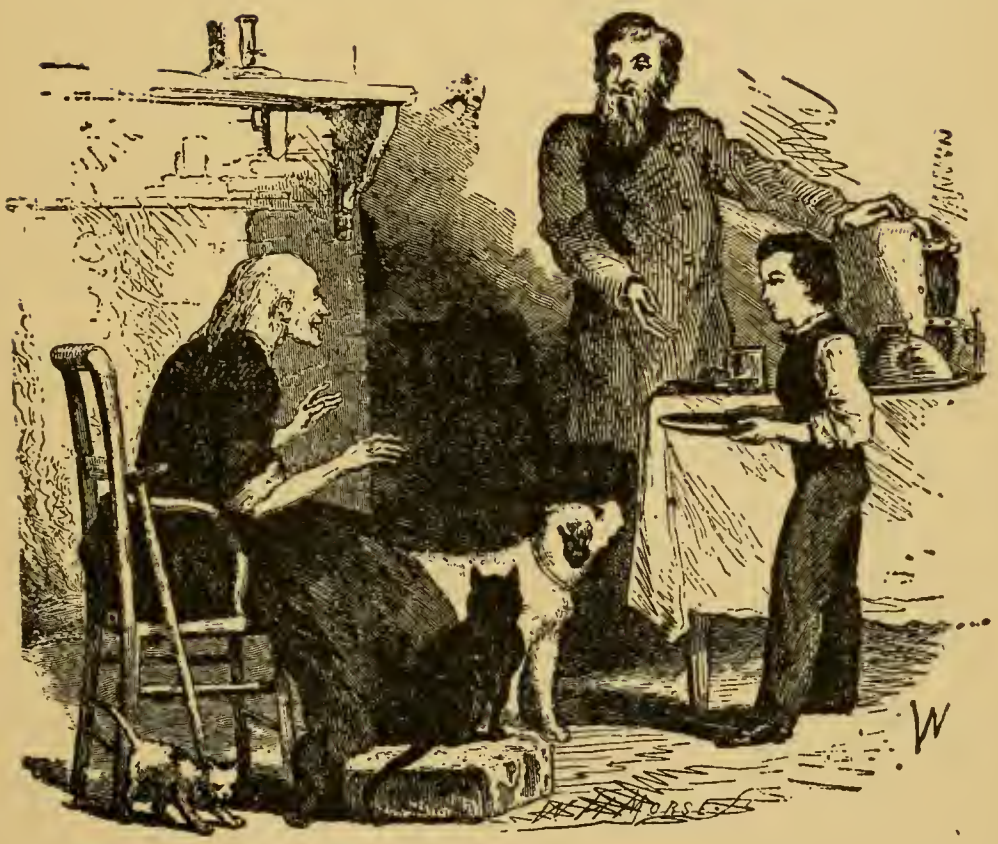
He placed his hand upon his heart,
And scraped and bowed so handy!
"Your humble servant, sir," he said,
Like any little dandy.

The widow laughed a long, loud laugh,
And up she started, screaming;
When ho! and lo! the room was dark!—
She'd been asleep and dreaming!

The stranger and his magic sack,
The dishes and the fishes,
The geese and things, had taken wings,
Like riches, or like witches!

All, all was gone! She sat alone;
Her hands had dropped their knitting.
"Meow-meow!" the cat upon the mat;
"Mew-mew! mew-mew!" the kitten.

The hearth is bleak,—and hark! the creak,—
"Chirp-chirp!" the lonesome cricket.



"Bow-wow!" says Ranger to the moon;
The wind is at the wicket.

And still she sits, and as she knits
She ponders o'er the vision;
"I saw it written on the sack,—
'A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION.'

"I know God sent the dream, and meant
To teach this useful lesson,
That out of peace and pure content
Springs every earthly blessing!"

Said she, "I'll make the sack my own!
I'll shake away all sorrow!"
She shook the sack for me to-day;
She'll shake for you to-morrow.

She shakes out hope; and joy, and peace,
And happiness come after;
She shakes out smiles for all the world;
She shakes out love and laughter.

For poor and rich,—no matter which,—
For young folks or for old folks,
For strong and weak, for proud and meek,
For warm folks and for cold folks;

For children coming home from school,
And sometimes for the teacher;
For white and black, she shakes the sack,—
In short, for every creature.

And everybody who has grief,
The sufferer and the mourner,

From far and near, come now to hear
Kind words from Mrs. Warner.

They go to her with heavy hearts,
They come away with light ones:
They go to her with cloudy brows,
They come away with bright ones.

All love her well, and I could tell
Of many a cheering present
Of fruits and things their friendship brings,
To make her fireside pleasant.

She always keeps a cheery fire;
The house is painted over;
She has food in store, and chairs for four,
A bureau, and a sofa.

She says these seem just like her dream,
And tells again the vision:
"I saw it written on the sack,—
'A Cheerful Disposition!'"

THE WILD GOOSE.

WHEN gruff winter goes, and from under his snows
Peeps the infantine clover,
And little lambs shrink on the bleak hills of March,
And April comes smiling beneath the blue arch ;

Then the forester sees from his door the
wild geese
Flying over.

Some to Winnipeg's shore; those to cold
Labrador;
Upon dark Memphremagog,
Swift flying, loud crying, these soon shall
alight,
And station their sentries to guard them
by night,
Or marshal their ranks to the thick-
wooded banks
Of Umbagog.

Now high in the sky, scarcely seen as
they fly,
Like the head of an arrow

Shot free from its shaft; then a dark-
wingèd chain;
Or at eventide, wearily over the plain,
Flying low, flying slow, sagging, lagging
they go,
Like a harrow.

Soon all have departed, save one regal-
hearted
Sad prisoner only;
No more shall he breast the blue ether, or
rest
In the reeds with his mate, keeping guard
by her nest,
Never glide by her side down the green-
fringèd tide
Fair and lonely.

With clipped pinions, fast in a farm-yard, at last
They have caged the sky-ranger!
'Mid the bustle and clucking and cackle of flocks,
The gossip of geese, and the crowing of cocks;
But apart from the rest, with his proud-curving breast,
Walks the stranger.

He refuses, with scorn braving hunger, the corn
From the hands of the givers,
Like a prince in captivity pacing his path;
Little pleasure he hath in his low, stagnant bath;

In that green, standing pool does he think
of his cool
Northern rivers?

Far away, far away, to some lone lake or
bay
His lost comrades are thronging;
In fancy he follows: he hears their glad
halloos
Round beautiful beaches, in bright plashy
shallows:
And now his dark eye he turns up at the
sky
With wild longing.

He hears them all day, singing, winging
their way,
Over mountains and torrents,

To Canadian hills and their clear water-
courses,
To the Ottawa's springs, to the Saguenay's
sources ;
And now they are going far down the
broad-flowing
Saint Lawrence.

Over grass-land and grove, searching inlet
and cove,
Speeds in dreams the wild gander!
He listens, he hastens, he screams on
their track ;
They hear him, they cheer him, they
welcome him back,
They shout his proud name, and with
loud clamors claim
Their Commander!

Past Huron and Saginaw, far over Mackinaw,
To lovely Itaska,
Their leader he goes; every river he knows;
They flock where the silver Saskatchawan flows,
Or sit lightly afloat upon high and remote Athabasca.

With his consort he leads forth their young ones, and feeds
By the pleasant morasses;
He shows them the tender young crab, and the bug,
The small tented snail, and the slow mantled slug,

And laughs as they eat the soft seeds and the sweet
Water-grasses.

But danger is coming! Lo, strutting and drumming
The turkey-cock charges!
The bright fancy breaks, in the farm-yard he wakes;
Never more he alights on the blue linkèd lakes
Of the North, or upsprings upon winnowing wings
From their marges!

Here all the long summer abides the newcomer
In chains ignominious,

Abandoned, companionless, far from his mate;
But his heart is still great though dishonored his state,
And his eyes still are dreaming of glad waters gleaming
And sinuous.

Then the rude Equinox drives before it the flocks
Of his comrades returning;
They sail on the gale high above the Ohio's
Broad ribbon, descending on prairies and bayous;
And again his dark eye is turned up at the sky
With wild yearning.

As sunward they go, far below, far below,
Coils the pale Susquehanna!
He sees them, far off in the twilight, encamp as
An army of souls upon dim, ruddy pampas;
Or at sunrise arrayed upon green everglade
And savanna.

So year after year, as their legions appear,
His lost state he remembers;
Wondering and wistful he watches their flight,
Or starts at their cries in the desolate night,
Dropped down to his hearkening ear through the darkening
Novembers.